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MEMOIR

OF

WILLIAM ELLERY CHANNING.

VOLUME I.

MEMOIR

OF

WILLIAM ELLERY CHANNING,

WITH

EXTRACTS FROM HIS CORRESPONDENCE AND MANUSCRIPTS.

IN THREE VOLUMES.

VOL. I.

FOURTH EDITION.

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PREFACE.

THIS work is an autobiography, in so far as the materials at my command have enabled me to give it that character, and consists of extracts from private papers, sermons, and letters, with such remarks only interwoven as seemed needed for purposes of illustration. Its plan is very simple. After a somewhat full and minute notice of Dr. Channing's early years, which will be found to present many interesting facts, and which no one hereafter could so well supply, I have proceeded to arrange the selections from his manuscripts according to the twofold order of Subject and of Time. This method was chosen as the one best fitted to convey an adequate impression of the steadiness with which he held all objects of thought before his mind, until his views became consistent and complete, and the growth of his opinions is in this way made clear, as well as the result of his progress. A thorough reader will consider any loss of vivacity in the narrative more than compensated for by the knowledge thus

gained of the mental and moral processes of an earnest seeker after truth and right. The chapters which are especially devoted to tracing this spiritual development, however, are so separated from the more general biographical parts, that any one who is inclined can pass them by. In giving such ample quotations from Dr. Channing's early writings I possibly have erred ; but this was the only use that could be made of them under the directions which he left, and in addition to the wish to aid others in forming a correct judgment of his life, I have been governed by the perhaps partial feeling, that the passages here printed were too good to be lost.

Courtesy seems to demand some explanation of the delay which has attended this publication ; for I would not willingly appear to slight the just claims of Dr. Channing's friends in this country or Great Britain, and impatient hints from many quarters have reminded me that the public feel, surely with good reason, that they have a right to a nearer acquaintance with a man who has been a spiritual father to so many. When the duty of preparing this memoir fell upon me, — because no other person who knew my uncle so well could or would undertake it, — I at once saw that some years must be allowed to pass before attempting to speak of one with whom I had lived in such intimate relations. A certain measure of independence is requisite for a biographer, and the atmosphere of his spirit and

genius had so surrounded me from boyhood, that I could not at once disengage myself from their charm. In the next place, urgent duties amidst religious and social movements, from which *he* would never have permitted me, on his account, to stand aloof, made such drafts upon time and power as to prevent the necessary concentration. And, finally, when a period of quiet seemed at last to be secured, prolonged and repeated illness came in to hinder the completion of my task.

Truth compels me to add, however, that dissatisfaction with my own work, and consequent efforts to remodel it, have been a chief source of apparent tardiness. It was my first design to present a finished portrait of William Ellery Channing, regarded as a man, a minister of religion, a philosopher, a reformer, and a statesman, — to point out his place among the leading persons of the age, — and, by exhibiting his relations to various parties, to sketch his Life and Times. Extensive preparations were made accordingly. But experiment at length satisfied me that it was far more difficult than I had supposed to shun the dishonesty of making my honored relative the exponent of my prejudices, without sinking into a tone of non-committal yet more at variance with his character and with the truth. I have therefore preferred silence to partiality or tameness, have limited myself to brief hints and descriptions, have stated for his such opinions only as there could be no risk of my misapprehending or misrepresenting, and, in a word, have left him to be his own interpreter.

Such as it is, this Memoir is now offered to the world. It will be found rich in documents illustrative of Dr. Channing's inner and outward life; and this constitutes the essential value of a biography. I claim only to have been a conscientious editor. The sense of responsibility to many friends has made it wholly impossible to speak with the hearty unreserve with which it would have been pleasing to communicate one's individual impressions of such a man; and in contrast with the ideal of what this work should be, the fragmentary notices here given seem meagre and dull indeed. I trust, however, that through all obscurations the bright original still shines forth.

A selection from Dr. Channing's Sermons, sufficiently large to form a volume of the same size with the edition of his works, is ready for the press. It has been proposed, also, to print a volume of fragments. But whether any of his remains will be published must depend very much upon the expressed wishes of those who are familiar with his writings.

W. H. C.

NOTE.

For reasons above stated, the editor of these papers has cancelled a sketch of the rise and progress of the "Unitarian Controversy," with which subject the first volume of this Memoir will be found to close. He had therein traced the three tendencies alluded to on pages 342, 343, from the middle of the last

century down to the present time, taking Edwards and the Revivalists as an illustration of Spiritualism, — Chauncy and the Reformers as an illustration of Philanthropy, — Mayhew and the Rationalists as an illustration of Free Inquiry. It was his wish to show that these movements — the partisans of which have so seldom done each other justice — were really auxiliary in introducing the higher era of religious life to which all denominations are now welcomed. A prominent place of honor was awarded to the fathers of Liberal Christianity in New England, and chief among these to James Freeman, William Bentley, Aaron Bancroft, Nathaniel Thayer, and Henry Ware, Sen. The powerful influence exerted by the Anthology Club in awakening freedom of thought and a love of sound scholarship was also distinctly shown. And, finally, the rightful position was assigned to the General Repository, — as the advance-guard of Unitarianism proper.

In this sketch, the editor did not hesitate to express his own conviction that the "Liberal Christians" committed an error, alike in principle and in policy, in allowing themselves to be driven into the attitude of a sect. Even down to 1820, this band of brethren, differing in *opinion*, but united in *spirit* and in *action*, sometimes called themselves Catholic Christians. The name was a grand one, and if they had adopted it and been indeed governed by it, there can be but little doubt that Theological Science would have been farther advanced among us than it now is. For what one of the great questions at issue among believers has been scientifically solved by the controversies of the last half-century? And how can they be thus solved, until, by a universal reception of the Life of Love, we are brought into nearer communion with God, and are enabled by experience to know more of the Divine End in the destiny of Man upon Earth?

But the chief desire of the editor in this note is to call the attention of his brethren of various denominations to the urgent need which there is of at once collecting the materials for an Ecclesiastical History of New England and the United States. The stock of books, pamphlets, tracts, &c., as yet gathered in any of our large libraries is very imperfect, and quite valuable matter is rapidly disappearing, never to be replaced. For instance, correspondence has been destroyed, in cases where the void thus

left cannot be supplied. He respectfully suggests, then, to his aged friends especially, alike among clergy and laity, in all cases to examine, sift, and select such letters, manuscripts, or pamphlets, as may be in their possession, tending to illustrate the progress of thought and of spiritual life in this country. He would further suggest that the libraries of the Theological Schools of various denominations would be a suitable place for depositing and registering such materials. For every thing there is a place and a time; and some one may presently appear, who in a truly catholic and humane, as well as philosophic spirit, will feel prompted to show the relation of our fathers' worship, opinions, practice, to the popular character and intelligence, to the manners, institutions, and forms of society in our nation.

CONTENTS

OF

VOLUME FIRST.

PART FIRST.

CHAPTER I.

PARENTAGE AND BIRTH.

1780.

Rhode Island, 3. Newport, 4. Birth, 6. William Ellery and Ann Remington, 6. John Channing and Mary Chaloner, 12. William Channing, 12. Lucy Ellery, 19.

CHAPTER II.

BOYHOOD.

ÆT. 1–14. 1780–1794.

Childhood, 22. Schoolmistress, 23. Mr. Rogers, 24. Intellectual Traits, 26. Home Education, 27. Political Influences, 29. Religious Influences, 30. Character, 35. New London, 41. Death of his Father, 41. Rev. Henry Channing, 43. Revival, 43.

CHAPTER III.

COLLEGE LIFE.

ÆT. 14–18. 1794–1798.

General Influences, 45. Appearance and Character, 50. Washington Allston, 50. Literary Societies, 55. Infidelity, 60. New Birth, 63. Favorite Studies, 65. Politics, 67. Choice of Profession, 72. College Friendships, 76.

CHAPTER IV.

RICHMOND.

ÆT. 18 20. 1798-1800.

David Meade Randolph, 79. Letter to his Mother, 80. Society, 81. Slavery, 83. Politics, 85. School, 96. Poverty, 97. Studies, 99. Musing, 102. Enthusiasm, 108. Perfect Society, 110. Preparation for the Ministry, 119. Self-consecration, 126. Return, 131.

CHAPTER V.

STUDIES AND SETTLEMENT.

ÆT. 20-23. 1800-1803.

Domestic Character, 132. Self-discipline, 133. Rev. Dr. Hopkins, 136. Regent at Harvard University, 143. Theological Studies, 146. Habits as a Student, 151. Theological Views, 159. First Sermon, 162. Invitation to settle, 163. Ordination, 171.

PART SECOND.

CHAPTER I.

EARLY MINISTRY.

ÆT. 23-34. 1803-1814.

Seriousness, 175. Private Papers, 182. Removal of his Family to Boston, 194. Disinterestedness, 195. Illness, 202. Power as a Preacher, 205. Character as a Pastor, 210. Friends, Rev. Dr. Kirkland, Rev. J. S. Buckminster, Rev. S. C. Thacher, 213. Correspondence, 218. Charities, 229. Political Sermons, 235. Manners, 239. The Good Minister, 240.

CHAPTER II.

SPIRITUAL GROWTH.

ÆT. 23-34. 1803-1814.

Moral and Mental Unity, 249. The Key-note, 251. SECTION FIRST,

— Religion, 252. SECTION SECOND, — Human Nature, 272. SECTION THIRD, — Christ and Christianity, 292. SECTION FOURTH, — Society, 315.

CHAPTER III.

THE UNITARIAN CONTROVERSY.

Holiness, Truth, Humanity, 343. Letters to Friends, 343. Freedom of Inquiry, 362. True Humility, 366. Sinfulness of Infants, 375. Dangers of Liberality, 377. Letter to Rev. S. C. Thacher, 380. Remarks on Rev. Dr. Worcester's Letter, 396. Remarks on Rev. Dr. Worcester's Second Letter, 407. Christian Union, 413. Christian Liberty, 415. Berry Street Conference, 418. Congregationalism, 425.

MEMOIR.

PART FIRST.

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CHAPTER I.

PARENTAGE AND BIRTH.

1780.

The island of Rhode Island, a brief sketch of whose scenery seems the befitting introduction to the memoir of a man formed so much under its influence, and who, late in life and on a sacred occasion, said,—"Amidst these scenes allow me to thank God that this beautiful island was the place of my birth,"*—lies at the southeastern extremity of the State of Rhode Island. On the north, east, and west, it is surrounded by Narragansett bay, while its southern point is open to the sea. To a spectator upon the main-land or in a boat, it presents an image of singular serenity, with its gently graded surface sloping downward on every side from the central ridge,—its fresh green pastures and meadows dotted with high conical haystacks,—its harvest fields and orchard plots marked off by regular stone walls,—its farm houses, weather-stained or white,

* Works, Vol. IV., p. 337. Discourse at the Dedication of the Unitarian Congregational Church, Newport, 1836.

with gardens and enclosures, scattered at intervals, — and its windmills waving their long arms upon the upper grounds. Its length is about fifteen miles, and a drive along the summit offers a succession of loveliest panoramas, from Quaker hill on the north, where the Narragansett bay is seen spreading out its silvery sheet, sprinkled with islets and stretching far inland, to Miantonomoh hill at the south, which overlooks the spires and shipping of Newport, — and ocean spreading far beyond, with sails and gleams of sunshine or fog-banks on the horizon. The breadth of the prospects, the wide tracts of water, the ever-varying cloud-scenery and softness of the atmosphere, the reflected lights from bays and ocean, the looming up and vanishing of distant headlands, the shutting in and opening of curtains of mist, and the verdure kept bright by continual dampness, refresh the landscape with charms which every hour and season change. Along the shores are several glens, overhung with groves, where streams wear away the soil and leave the naked rocks, and at whose mouths are pebbly margins, strewn with shells and seaweed, offering pleasant walks and views across the water to the neighbouring coasts. At the south juts out a neck, upon whose crags and ledges the surf breaks, in calm weather even, with a glory of foam and spray, and in storms with awful magnificence. While further to the east extend beaches of three miles or more in length, lying broadly open to the Atlantic, where the green waves curl and dash with every tide, and across whose shelving sands, after a southern gale, the long rolling billows sweep with a roar that may be heard for many miles.

Newport, the chief town on the island, was, before the Revolution, quite a prosperous commercial capital, and after the war became the seat of government of the State

of Rhode Island. It was, as it now is, a place of frequent resort for strangers, especially from the South, who came to pass there the summer months, attracted by the delightful climate, the ocean and rural scenery, the pleasures of sea-bathing, and the liberal, even luxurious, hospitality of the citizens. The presence of French and English officers during the revolutionary struggle gave new stimulants to the social tendencies of the inhabitants, and polished the already somewhat stately courtesy of their manners. Wealthy merchants, professional men established for eminence of talent in the then most important town of Rhode Island, successful sea-captains retired from service, and residents drawn thither by motives of health and enjoyment, formed a society not wanting in refinement, fond of pleasantry, and very cordial. A more than usual proportion of eccentric characters, also, gave, by quaint talk and extravagant ways, a dash of originality to the otherwise somewhat dull proprieties of the place. It is remembered, too, that, owing partly to the effect of French liberalism, partly to the license of speech so common among sea-faring men, profanity, at that period indeed a general vice, was in most classes habitual; and that, from the influence of the West India trade, as well as from the custom of the time, intemperance abounded. On the other hand, exact attention was paid to sacred seasons and observances, somewhat of the old Puritanic sternness was inculcated as evidence of a godly spirit, and the prevalent tone of preaching was serious, perhaps even gloomy. The principles of free thought and speech, however, transmitted by the magnanimous and wise Roger Williams through the whole state of which he was founder, as well as by Mrs. Anne Hutchinson and Gov. Coddington, who with their friends first settled the island, and by Samuel Gorton and his fol-

lowers, — the liberal temper everywhere engendered by the war for independence, — and the discussions awakened by the skepticism of the age, were hostile to bigotry in theological opinions, or to irksome restraints on conduct. If, finally, it is considered that the town was alive with the bustle of successful enterprise not then diverted into other channels, and that its citizens were warmly interested in the political controversies of the time, a sufficiently accurate notion may be formed of the moral atmosphere of Newport.

It was here, that, on the 7th of April, 1780, WILLIAM ELLERY CHANNING, the third child of WILLIAM CHANNING and LUCY ELLERY, was born.

His grandparents, upon the father's and the mother's side alike, were persons of more than common energy, both in character and intelligence.

William Ellery, his mother's father, was a man of singular heartiness, honesty, good sense, and simplicity. "Graduated at Harvard College in 1747, he entered upon business as a merchant in his native town, Newport, which then offered every encouragement to an enterprising man, and was full of attractions to one of his social temper. He married, early in life, Ann, the daughter of Judge Remington, of Cambridge, Massachusetts, an excellent woman, prudent, affable, and hospitable, ever watchful over her children, and careful that her husband should find no place so agreeable to him as his home." *

An anecdote of their married life pleasantly shows the character of each, and the quality of their affection.

* Life of William Ellery. By Edward Tyrrel Channing. Sparks's American Biography, Vol. VI., 1st Series.

"It was Mr. Ellery's custom to spend his evenings with a party of young friends at some place of convivial resort; and it is enough to say of their amusements, that they were any thing but intellectual, and just suited to make one's home the last place he would look to for his pleasures, and of course the very place where duty itself must soon become irksome. It was an essential part of domestic economy at that time for the matron to write upon the margin or blank leaves of her almanac any of the memorable occurrences in the daily experience of the household. One day, his wife had recorded as its most precious event, and with expressions of tenderness and gratitude, that her husband had passed the evening with her and her children. This, not many days after, fell under his eye, but he said not a word. If there was any upbraiding, it was all from his own heart. The same evening he returned to his usual haunt, and at once announced to his friends that he had come to take his parting cup with them, and that hereafter he should seek his evening pleasures at home. Some disbelieved, others scoffed; could this be true of a man of his gayety and spirit? But their surprise and boisterous ridicule he was prepared for, and true to his purpose and word he left them, and was ever after a thoroughly domestic man; and such was the effect of his resolution upon them, that in no long time the party was broken up and succeeded by pleasant meetings in each other's families.

"He often told this little incident as if it had deeply moved him. He had connected it indissolubly with a beloved wife, too early lost; and when he spoke of it, there was a tremulousness upon his lips, and a placidness of expression, which denoted his never-ceasing gratitude and love. Fifty years after her death, he says of her,—'You read, in the grave-yard in Cambridge, the epitaph of your grandmother, a woman dear to me and to all who were acquainted with her. Alas! I was too early deprived of her society.' She died in Cam-

bridge, September 7, 1764, at the age of thirty-nine, and her husband returned to his home and children a sorely stricken and bowed down man."

The following letter presents a spirited, though certainly not a flattered, sketch of Mr. Ellery, and of his life, from his own pen.

"*Newport, January*, 1796.

"If the year before I graduated I had determined upon law, or physic, especially the latter, I am persuaded that I should have led a more profitable and useful life than I have done; and I had a fine opportunity for either study. I could have studied the law under Judge Trowbridge, with whom I sometime boarded, or, if I had chosen the study of physic, my father would have placed me with a physician; but no one advised me, and I made no choice. I entered into small commerce without a spirit of enterprise or skill in trade; that would not do; I had married a wife, and could not submit to be an understrapper to a physician. I became a clerk of a court; there I copied writs and declarations, gained some knowledge of practice, and stood forth a dabbler, when, if I had, at the time I quitted college, gone into Mr. Trowbridge's office, I might have been a regular, well-instructed attorney, or, if I had studied physic, I might have been a skilful practitioner. I have been a clerk of a court, a quack lawyer, a member of congress, one of the lords of the admiralty, a judge, a loan officer, and finally a collector of the customs, and thus, not without many difficulties, but as honestly, thank God, as most men, I have got almost through the journey of a varied and sometimes anxious life."

"Mr. Ellery, though urging the young to keep to a single business, to love it, and find distinction in it, and though inclined in his own habits to steady, systematic application, was obliged to give up merchandise in the time of embarrassing revenue acts and non-importation agreements, when there

was little or nothing for him to do but to join heart and hand, as he did, with the 'Sons of Liberty,' and in 1770 began the practice of the law. He was, as he says in a letter, a 'staunch friend to political liberty, and that liberty with which the Gospel has made us free.' And his sense of the worth of freedom could be the more relied on, as it did not spring from eager sympathy with the sudden excitements of the day, but from principles which his experience and reflection had prudently developed and confirmed. It was a deep-seated passion and a moral preference. To forward political liberty was, in his view, to follow every individual to his own heart and home with a blessing. According to his own strong language, he placed his obligations to uphold liberty as high as those which bound him to his wife and children. He had thus far held no political or judicial office; but he was known to the people for his firmness, judgment, and devotion to the public cause; had shown himself a public-hearted man in the first struggles against encroachments upon the rights of the colonies; had been upon important committees, whose business was to procure the repeal of oppressive revenue acts; was acquainted with the active spirits who were preparing themselves and the people for a separation from the mother country; and had inspired a general confidence in his fitness for a high civil trust, let the aspect of affairs be ever so perplexing. Thus approved, he was chosen as delegate of Rhode Island in the memorable Congress of 1776, and with his venerable colleague, Stephen Hopkins, set his name to the Declaration of Independence.

"Mr. Ellery was in Congress from 1776 to 1786, with the exception of the years 1780 and 1782; and while there had universal confidence for his prudent, straight-forward, practical view of affairs, and for his consistent, independent, decided conduct. Besides the respect which his abilities and character thus obtained, his social spirit and powers of conversa-

tion, his wit, pleasantry, and good-humored satire, which could enliven a party of friends at their lodgings, or sweep away the fallacies and whims of members in a debate, brought him into delightful intimacy with leading men.

"His character bore the marks of habitual self-inspection and self-resistance. Humility was the virtue which he seemed to prize as the most comprehensive and productive. His effort was to bring every thought and desire into subjection before God, and to find security and motive in a fixed sense of his deficiencies and his obligations. This constant study of humility was his light and strength. It cleared and simplified the purpose of human life. It gave him more and more the command of his faculties, and the exercise of his affections, and the power of devoting himself to duty. It showed him on what false principles men are commonly pronounced great, and how monstrous are arrogance and oppression in a mortal. But this moral warfare never threw an air of constraint or austerity upon his intercourse with others. It seemed as if his spirits were kept elastic by his constant guard over them. His very kindness and gentleness had none of the inertness of mere good temper, but were animated by an active cherished principle of love, which discriminated its objects and was all alive for the happiness of another.

"In the pursuit of truth, he seemed more anxious for the certainty than the amount and variety of results. He was not fond of indulging in conjectures, that he might fill the void where he had in vain looked for satisfying truth; nor was he unhappy because of the uncertainties which cannot be cleared up in an imperfect state of being. His feelings and wishes, and every extraneous or accidental circumstance, were as if they did not exist, in his sober-minded inquiry. Or rather, the very influences that are most apt to mislead did but sound the alarm to him to be single-hearted, and made his power of discerning the keener. He had the

plainest common sense, and the most prudent judgment in common affairs; and not so much from having lived long in the world, as from his right temper of mind, and his habit of going far into the reason of things. This honesty or fairness of mind was his great distinction and an explanation of his character. It was a proof of his moral and intellectual vigor. It was a religious principle. It ran through all his studies and experience, restraining him from injustice and compelling him to condemn injustice; opening the way through ancient errors of whatever kind, and for the admission of light from whatever quarter; and making it absolutely impossible that he should be a partisan or idolater in anything.

"His kindness and warmth of affection were especially manifest in his intercourse with the young. A plain man, in years, living in retirement, and obtruding his opinions upon no one, he drew them to him as if he were their dependence; and they felt that they owed to him not only some of their best remembered seasons of pleasure, but in no small degree the direction and coloring of their thoughts. When he saw any thing to blame, he spoke plainly and earnestly, and suffered no weakness of affection to conceal or impair the force of what he thought it his duty to say. If they neglected his admonitions and disappointed his expectations, his regret was unmingled with selfishness, and his affection unabated. They might need it the more."

After leaving Congress, Mr. Ellery was for many years collector of the customs in Newport, where he lived to the age of ninety-three, beloved by a large circle of relatives and friends, and affectionately honored by his fellow-citizens. He was remarkable, to the very close of his long life, for youthfulness of feeling, brightness of mind, and ready interest in nature, people, literature, events.

This sketch of the grandfather will be found to illustrate in no unimportant degree both the character and intellect of his distinguished grandson; for William but recorded his own experience, when, after he had reached mature life, he wrote to Mr. Ellery, — "You have hardly a grandchild who cannot trace back some of his sentiments and principles to your instructive and condescending conversation."

John Channing, William's grandfather on the paternal side, was a respectable, and, till towards the close of life, a prosperous merchant of Newport. He was son of John Channing, of Dorsetshire, England, — the first of the name who came to America, — and of Mary Antram, who arrived together in Boston in 1712, and were soon after married. The wife of John Channing, Jr., was Mary Chaloner (the widow of Dr. James Robinson, physician), whom the elderly people of Newport well remember for her energy of character and dignity of manner. They still describe her as sitting, of an afternoon, behind the counter of the small shop, — by means of which she supported her family in her widowhood, — dressed with great precision, busily knitting, and receiving her customers or visiters with an air of formal courtesy that awed the young and commanded general respect. She was a high-spirited and ardent, yet religious and conscientious woman, and remarkable for activity and method.

William Channing, their second son, was born in Newport, June 11, 1751, and educated at Nassau Hall, Princeton College, New Jersey, where he graduated in 1769. He read law with Oliver Arnold, at Providence; in 1771, began the practice of his profession at Newport; in 1773, married Lucy Ellery, the daughter of William Ellery; in 1777, became attorney-general of his native

state, and upon the adoption of the Federal Constitution, without any solicitation on his part, was appointed to the office of district attorney for the district of Rhode Island.

Hon. Asher Robbins, late member of the Senate of the United States from Rhode Island, writes of him thus : —

" Mr. Channing was very well read in the law, especially in the forms of pleading ; law cases were his favorite reading, even for amusement. He had a large library, and one very well selected.

" He interested himself much in state politics, and his office was the central point of rendezvous, where the leading men congregated for their consultations.

" He was very popular in the State, was attorney-general and district attorney at the same time, and held both offices at the time of his death.

" His manner of speaking at the bar was rapid, vehement, and impressive ; never studied, nor exactly methodical in his pleadings ; but he always came well prepared as to matter and authority. He had an extensive practice, attended all the courts regularly, and was considered, for several years before his death, as the leading counsel of the State.

" In person, he was of the middle stature, well made, erect, and of an open countenance ; he was lively and pleasant in his conversation, and much disposed to social intercourse ; he was hospitable and kind-hearted. His agreeable manner was one great source of his general popularity.

" In dress, he was not remarkable for any particular ; it was always proper and becoming, though not an object of much attention with him ; the color was commonly black ; indeed, I do not recollect ever to have seen him in any other.

" His temper was remarkably good, as were his manners, mild, liberal, generous ; his habits were also correct, temper-

ate, industrious, mindful and observant of all the duties and proprieties of life."

In addition, his father-in-law, Mr. Ellery, says of him:—

"He repeatedly served as a deputy for his native town; and such was his regard for its interests, that he did not decline that service, until, by the extensiveness of his practice, and the increase of his family, he was compelled to give to them his whole attention.

"He early became the head of a family. He married in the twenty-third year of his age, and performed the offices and charities of a husband and father with strict, constant, and tender attention, and was beloved and respected.

"The law of kindness and benevolence was in his heart and on his tongue. The persons employed by him as domestics, and in other services, he treated with great humanity, and rewarded with a liberal punctuality. He was an obedient and respectful son, and a most affectionate brother and friend. To the poor he was compassionate. The needy never went away from his house empty. His table and his purse were always open to their wants, and his munificence was ever accompanied with a sweetness in the manner, which doubled the obligations of gratitude.

"His religious sentiments were liberal. He was particularly attached to the Congregational denomination of Christians, but he treated all good men of all denominations with kindness and respect. He generously contributed to the support of Christian worship in the society to which he belonged, and countenanced and encouraged it by a constant and reverential attendance, and the ministers of religion experienced his hospitality.

"His political sentiments were displayed in a warm attachment to the rights of mankind, chastened by a love of peace and order.

"His countenance and deportment expressed the amiableness and benevolence of his disposition, and his morals corresponded with his manners. He was temperate and honest; he was courteous and respectful. As he keenly felt the distresses of mankind, so was he as strongly disposed to relieve their sufferings. He looked down with such pity on the poor and afflicted as encouraged them to look up to him for succour as to a brother."

These reminiscences of the father are confirmed and completed by the following beautiful notice, written in 1841, by his son William: *—

"*Boston, December* 18, 1841.

"My recollections of my father are imperfect, as he died when I was thirteen years of age, and I had been sent from home before that event. But the many testimonies which I have received to his eminence as a lawyer, as well as to his private virtues, make me desirous that there should be some memorial of him.

"My father retained much attachment to Princeton College, where he was educated, so that he thought of sending me there. He was the classmate and friend of Samuel S. Smith, afterwards distinguished as a theologian, and as the president of that institution. In the last part of his collegiate days he enjoyed the instructions of the celebrated Dr. Witherspoon.

"His early marriage and the rapid increase of his family obliged him to confine himself rigidly to his profession. He was too busy to give much time to general reading, or even to his family. Still, I have distinct impressions of his excellence in his social relations. He was the delight of the circle in which he moved. His mother, brothers, and sisters leaned on him as on no other. I well remember the benignity of his countenance and voice. At the same time he was

* Memoirs of the Rhode Island Bar, by Wilkins Updike, Esq.

a strict disciplinarian at home, and, according to the mistaken notions of that time, kept me at too great a distance from him. In truth, the prevalent notions of education were much more imperfect than in our day.

"I often went into courts, but was too young to understand my father's merits in the profession; yet I had always heard of him as standing at its head. My brother says that Judge Dawes used to speak of his style and manner as 'mellifluous,' but at times he was vehement, for I well recollect that I left the court-house in fear, at hearing him indignantly reply to what seemed to him unworthy language in the opposite counsel.

"His parents were religious, and the impressions made on his young mind were never lost. He was the main pillar of the religious society to which he belonged. The house of worship had suffered much from the occupation of Newport by the British army, so as to be unfit for use; and I recollect few things in my childhood more distinctly than his zeal in restoring it to its destination, and in settling a minister. I cannot doubt that his religious character received important aid from the ministry and friendship of Dr. Stiles, who was as eminent for piety as learning, and under whose teachings he grew up. He had a deep, I may say peculiar, abhorrence of the vice of profaneness; and such was his influence, that his large family of sons escaped this taint to a remarkable degree, though brought up in the midst of it. I recollect, with gratitude, the strong impression which he made on my own mind. I owed it to him, that, though living in the atmosphere of this vice, no profane word ever passed my lips.

"On one subject I think of his state of mind with sorrow. His father, like most respectable merchants of that place, possessed slaves imported from Africa. They were the domestics of the family; and my father had no sensibility to the evil. I remember, however, with pleasure, the affectionate relation

which subsisted between him and the Africans (most of them aged) who continued to live with my grandfather. These were liberated after the Revolution; but nothing could remove them from their old home, where they rather ruled than served. One of the females used to speak of herself as the daughter of an African prince; and she certainly had much of the bearing of royalty. The dignity of her aspect and manner bespoke an uncommon woman. She was called Duchess, probably on account of the rank she had held in her own country. I knew her only after she was free and had an establishment of her own. Now and then she invited all the children of the various families with which she was connected to a party, and we were liberally feasted under her hospitable roof. My father won the hearts of all his domestics. One of the sincerest mourners, at his death, was an excellent woman who had long lived with us, and whom he honored for her piety.

"I recollect, distinctly, the great interest he took in the political questions which agitated the country. Though but eight or nine years of age, I was present when the Rhode Island Convention adopted the Federal Constitution; and the enthusiasm of that moment I can never forget. My father entered with his whole heart into that unbounded exultation. He was one of the most devoted members of the Federal party. At the beginning of the French Revolution, he shared in the universal hope and joy which it inspired; but I well recollect the sadness with which he talked to us, one Sunday afternoon, of the execution of Louis the Sixteenth; and from that moment his hopes died.

"You speak of the testimony borne to him by the late Elisha R. Potter, Esq. My father was among the first to discover the abilities of that remarkable man; and I remember the kindness with which he used to receive him. His spirit was, in truth, the kindest. He was ever ready to see and appreciate superior talents, and to attach himself to

worth. His friendship seemed to me singularly strong for a man so immersed in business. Among his friends, were George Champlin, Esq., a politician of singular capacity, and who was said to have ruled the State for years without forfeiting his integrity; Dr. Isaac Senter, a physician of extensive practice, who was thought to unite with great experience a rare genius in his profession, and whose commanding figure rises before me at the distance of forty-five years, as a specimen of manly beauty worthy the chisel of a Grecian sculptor; and the Rev. Dr. Hitchcock, of Providence, a man of great sweetness of temper, and who deserves the grateful remembrance of that city for his zealous efforts in the cause of public education. My father took a great pleasure in the society of ministers, and always welcomed them to his hospitable dwelling.

"I remember his tastes with pleasure. He had two gardens, one of them quite large, and as he sought to have every thing which he cultivated of the best kind, our table, otherwise simple, was, in this respect, luxurious. He was not satisfied with what contented his neighbours, but introduced new varieties of vegetables into the town. He also took great interest in sacred music. On Sunday evening, the choir of the congregation, which included most of the younger members, and other amateurs, met in his office for practice in singing. The apartment, somewhat spacious, was filled; and the animation of the meeting, to which his zeal contributed not a little, made the occasion one of my weekly pleasures.

"As far as I can trust my recollections of my father's person, it must have been very prepossessing; but to me his appearance, at the time, was more venerable than beautiful. His head was bald; and his cocked hat, and the other parts of his dress, which, according to the fashions of the day, differed much from the costume of the young, made him seem from the first an old man.

"He prospered in life, but without being able to leave a competence to his large family. His labors were great, but I have no recollection of seeing him depressed. I should place him among the happy. He was taken away in the midst of usefulness and hope. The disease of which he died was not understood. I remember that he used to complain of feelings which we now should consider as dyspepsia; but that disease was little thought of then, and the name never heard.

"These are very scanty reminiscences; but as I hardly saw my father after reaching my twelfth year, and as nearly fifty years have passed since that time, it is not to be wondered at that I can recall no more of his calm, uniform life. The career of a professional man, occupied with the support of a large family, offers no great events.

"I little thought, when I began, of writing so much; but the pleasure which all men take in the virtues of parents has led me on insensibly.

"My father died before I could requite him for his toils for my support and his interest in my moral well-being; and I feel as if, in this present instance, I was discharging some part, though a very small one, of my great debt. I owed him much, and it is not my smallest obligation that his character enables me to join affectionate esteem and reverence with my instinctive gratitude.

"Very truly, yours,

"W. E. Channing."

Lucy Ellery, William's mother, resembled her father in energy, judgment, practical skill, and integrity. But she added to these traits a tenderness of sensibility and a deep enthusiasm, which threw a charm of romance over her conduct and conversation. She was small in person, but erect in bearing and elastic in movement; and strongly marked features, with a singularly bright and penetrating

eye, gave her an air of self-reliance and command. Her manner was generally benignant, often tenderly affectionate, and marked by the dignified courtesy of the old school; but if pretension and fraud, in any of their manifold disguises, crossed her path, she became chillingly reserved and blunt to the verge of severity. Her feelings were quick, her humor was lively, and so did she clothe sagacious thoughts in quaint dialect, that she was as entertaining a companion as she was a wise counsellor. The whole tone of her mind and temper was original; blending, in a rare union, shrewdness and sympathy, caution and fresh impulse, devoted generosity and strict conscience, stern straightforwardness and cordial love. In a word, there was a rough nobleness in her ways, which irresistibly won affection and respect, and made her influence powerful for good on all within her sphere. The following sketch, by her son William, may best introduce her.

"The most remarkable trait in my mother's character was the rectitude and simplicity of her mind. Perhaps I have never known her equal in this respect. She was true in thought, word, and life. She had the firmness to see the truth, to speak it, to act upon it. She was direct in judgment and conversation, and in my long intercourse with her I cannot recall one word or action betraying the slightest insincerity. She had keen insight into character. She was not to be imposed upon by others, and, what is rarer, she practised no imposition on her own mind. She saw things, persons, events, as they were, and spoke of them by their right names. Her partialities did not blind her, even to her children. Her love was without illusion. She recognized unerringly and with delight fairness, honesty, genuine uprightness, and shrunk as by instinct from every thing specious, the factitious in character, and plausible manners."

Born of parents thus rich in natural gifts, and well trained, William inherited a physical organization at once delicate and vigorous, and tendencies of heart and mind in which the virtues of both were most happily balanced. He is remembered as having been an infant of rare loveliness, and was from the first an idol. Such prophetic affection tends naturally to bring the fulfilment of its hopes ; and certainly, in the present instance, the expectant trust of the mother was an exhaustless incentive to the son. She lived for more than fifty years after his birth, and their relation throughout this long, and for the most part unbroken, period of intercourse was as beautiful as it was rich in mutual blessing.

CHAPTER II.

BOYHOOD.

ÆT. 1–14. 1780–1794.

The earliest description given of William is from an aged relative, who says, — "I remember him as a boy three or four years old, with brilliant eyes, glowing cheeks, and light-brown hair falling in curls upon his shoulders, dressed in a green velvet jacket, with ruffled collar and white underclothes, standing by his mother's side on the seat of the pew, and looking round upon the congregation. I thought him the most splendid child I ever saw." Allowance must of course be made, in our estimate of such a sketch, for any reflected brightness which success in after life may have thrown upon the memory. But all testimony confirms this impression of the beaming beauty of William's childhood ; and to those who have associations only with the wasted form, thin features, and sunken eyes of the preacher, whose spirit seemed about to cast aside the body, this picture of the blooming boy will not be without the charm, at least, of contrast.

Owing to his mother's poor state of health, the children were early placed at school, and William was sent when yet so young that he was often carried in the arms of a colored man. One of his first recollections was of being taken to the school-room one morning after the good mistress had died. The stillness which prevailed in

place of the usual bustle, the slow steps, the hushed voices, and the sight of the dead body, left a feeling of awe so strong that he vividly recalled the scene in the very last year of his life.

He next was subjected to the discipline of a most rigid dame, who used to enforce order by means of a long pole, like a fishing-rod, — with which she could reach every corner of the room. Of this chapter in his experience, he wrote, many years afterward, the following humorous account : —

" I was a little amused with the objection which you say the ——s made to your proposed school, that you want those essential qualifications of a teacher, — gray hairs and spectacles. This objection brought back to my mind the venerable schoolmistress under whose care my infant faculties were unfolded. She, indeed, would have suited the ——s to a hair. Her nose was peculiarly privileged and honored, for it bore *two* spectacles. The locks which strayed from her close mob-cap were most evidently the growth of other times. She sat in a large easy-chair, and, unlike the insect forms of modern days, she filled the capacious seat. Her title was *Madam*, a title which she exclusively enjoyed. When we entered her door we kissed our hands, and Madam was the first word which escaped our lips. But I would not have you suppose that there was nothing but a title, and spectacles, and gray locks to insure our respect. Madam was wiser than the ——s. She did not trust chiefly to age. On the right arm of her easy-chair there reclined what to common eyes appeared only a long round stick ; but so piercing was its vision, so quick its hearing, so rapid its motions, so suddenly did it reach the whispering or idle delinquent, that Ovid, had he known it, would have been strongly tempted to trace it, by many a strange metamorphosis, back to Argus, or some other watchful, sleepless being of ancient mythol-

ogy. We, trembling wights, were satisfied with feeling, and had no curiosity to explore its hidden properties. Do you ask where this mysterious wand is to be found? I fear it is irrecoverably lost. The storm of revolution, which has so lately passed over us, not contented with breaking the sceptres and hurling down the thrones of monarchs, burst into the school-room, and Madam's title and rod were swept away in the general desolation."

From this guardian of decorum, he passed into the keeping of two excellent women and good teachers, under whose care he improved rapidly, and with whom he was so much of a favorite as to be constantly set up as a model for the other children's imitation. The regard in which he was held by his young companions, also, was pleasantly shown by an answer given to the mistress, when, one day, as usual, she said to an unruly urchin, — "I wish in my heart you were like William Channing." "Oh," exclaimed the poor child, "I can 't be like him; it is not half so hard for him to be good as it is for me."

As he grew older, William was advanced to the boarding and day school of Mr. Rogers, which was considered the best in the town, and indeed had so high a reputation, that boys from a distance, especially from the South, were sent to his charge. It was the habit of that time to use flogging as the common penalty, and no master would then have responded, as all good ones must now do, to the words of Vogel, — "When we teachers become fully competent to our work, the necessity of corporeal punishment will cease altogether." * This is mentioned, because it is certain that what he then experienced outraged his sensitive honor, and served to arouse the feeling of in-

* Hon. H. Mann's Seventh Report, as Secretary of the Massachusetts Board of Education.

dignation against any form of violence used towards children, which grew so strong in him in later years. He would often tell an anecdote of a little boy in school trying to shield with his arms a larger one, whom the master was about to whip. The contrast of the great heart with the small physical power, the noble position of the young remonstrant against tyranny, produced an indelible impression upon his childish imagination, and made the severity of the teacher and the quarrelling of the children detestble and hideous. He had through life an utter contempt and horror for every arbitrary infliction of bodily pain; and once, when conversing with a person who advocated the use of the lash in the army, navy, and prisons, broke forth with, — "What! strike a *man!*" with such a thrilling tone, that it completely overwhelmed his hearer, and awakened in him an entirely new sense of the dignity of a human being.

In connection with this degradation of boys by whipping, he sometimes remarked that his first feeling of the sacredness of woman was called out by observing that the delicate hands of the girls at school were never marked by the ferule. But, indeed, this early sentiment of reverence for women was probably owing to his lively sensibility to female loveliness. For once, while gazing on a child, as she danced playfully round him, he said, with a tone of deep tenderness, — "She brings so to mind the days when her mother, then a gay little girl, used with her companions to creep from the school-room unnoticed by the master, and I, looking out of the window, would watch her as she skipped down the street, and with boastful gesture mocked the boys who could not follow. She seemed, with her hair floating on her shoulders, as she lightly moved, so very beautiful. I have

a clearer notion of the bliss of a seraph in heaven now than I had then, of the joyous spirit which buoyed up that form."

As a pupil, it is said that William was patient and diligent, but not remarkable for quickness of perception. He rather examined carefully the subject offered to his attention, listening to his teacher, till satisfied that he thoroughly understood his meaning, than comprehended it at once by rapid insight. Indeed, like many men, afterward distinguished for intellectual power, he was thought dull; and the story runs, that he found the difficulties in acquiring Latin to be insurmountable, until an assistant in his father's office, taking pity on the plodding boy, said one evening, — "Come, Bill! they say you are a fool, but I know better. Bring me your grammar, and I 'll soon teach you Latin." But having thus taken the first step by aid of his judicious friend, his progress was so rapid that he early became distinguished for classical attainments. In a letter to a young friend, he alludes to the delight with which he first read Virgil, and he often referred to his boyish pleasure in this class of studies. For mathematics, also, he showed both aptitude and fondness, and he retained through life quite uncommon quickness and accuracy in the combination of numbers, though his subsequent pursuits were little fitted to develop this latent taste. Considerateness, reflection, thoroughness, rather than brilliancy, originality, or force, seem to have been his mental manifestations at school. But so much depends upon the skill of the teacher, upon penetration to detect, and readiness of sympathy to foster, the peculiar genius of a child, that but small reliance can be placed upon such indications as he then gave of his intellectual biases. All that is actually known is, that he gained the respect of his

instructors, held a high rank among his fellows, and awakened the warm hopes of his friends; for, in a letter written towards the close of his school days, his father, using the stately style of expressing affection then common, says to him, — "We expect much from our son William, and flatter ourselves that we shall not be disappointed."

Of the more important education which William received from the influences of home and of society, he has himself given a graphic, though slight sketch, in the letter descriptive of his father. But it may be well to dwell on these influences for a moment, as they did much to give direction to his moral energies. His father's dignified reserve towards his children has been noticed with regret by the son; but still the pervading sweetness of his manner must have captivated them, and won their confidence, for, by universal report, his presence was like a sunbeam, — so did cheerfulness, serenity, good humour, pleasantry, kind regard for others' rights and feelings, and assiduity to please, surround him with an atmosphere of love. The mother was not of a tranquil temperament ; but the father, in the gentlest tone, would soothe her when disturbed by household perplexities, or by the children's tumult, saying, "Do not trouble yourself, Lucy ; I will make all smooth." They who were ever under the charm of Dr. Channing's blandness may readily conceive how much in early life he had been affected by his father's beautiful domestic character. And from the mother's scrupulous thoroughness he no less derived practical habits of the highest use. She was the boys' overseer in the care of the garden, when, as they grew strong enough, they were intrusted with tools ; and she was a judge difficult to please. If the seeds were well planted, the beds kept clean, the paths swept, they had kind words and

reward; but if they slighted their task, they must go hungry. In the plain but expressive phrase of our farmers, she would have no "shirking." She kept a close watch that her children should not fall into danger or mischief, and was in all respects exact. Among other restrictions, one may be mentioned, as illustrating at once her caution and William's conscientiousness. She forbade the boys from bathing in the sea without the protection of some grown person. Of course, the temptation constantly presented by the neighbourhood of the water, the facilities offered by the beach and boats at the wharf, and the example of those of their own age, proved often too strong; and then, if, after efforts to dry their hair by rubbing and basking in the sun, the ends were found wet, off went the jacket, and a brisk application of the rod followed. But while his brothers disregarded this unreasonable restraint, as to them it seemed, and became good swimmers, William, though as eager for sport, and as fearless as they, used to walk quietly home, alone. He through life regretted that filial respect had demanded the sacrifice of so manly and useful an accomplishment. The mother was a person overflowing with generosity, though at the same time she was frugal from the sense of her parental responsibilities; and the children, left to the charge of a strict domestic, thought their fare sometimes scanty; but William, it is remembered, was grateful and contented. In relation to this point, he once said, — "When I was young, the luxury of eating was carried to the greatest excess in Newport. My first notion, indeed, of glory was attached to an old black cook, whom I saw to be the most important personage in town. He belonged to the household of my uncle, and was in great demand wherever there was to be a dinner." The extreme simplicity of

his own after habits may have been, in a measure, owing to the disgust which he thus early felt for self-indulgence, and to the plainness of living to which he was accustomed at home. While thus over-cautious, however, the good mother was still genuinely affectionate, and faithfully supplied, according to her ability, the absence of paternal guidance ; for the father was for the most part too busy in his multifarious duties to be able to pay much heed to his family.

But though so little under the direct influence of his father's character, William's principles were yet permanently fashioned by his example. From him, and from his grandfather, and their conversations on public questions, at the critical period when our nation was settling into order after the upheaval of the Revolution, and when Europe was shaken from end to end by the first waves of the grand social earthquake, he doubtless derived that spirit of patriotism and interest in political movements by which he was afterwards characterized. His father, as a leading lawyer, and an earnest supporter of the Federal party, necessarily received at his house various eminent men who visited Newport. Washington dined there when on his northern tour ; and it can be readily understood how much a boy's enthusiasm, already fervent from hearing him always spoken of in terms of honor, was heightened by thus seeing the Father of the Nation face to face. Jay, too, and other men remarkable for political, professional, and literary talent were there, waking by their presence generous ambition. And by Dr. Stiles, once pastor in Newport, and afterwards President of Yale College, William was so moved, that late in life he used in relation to him this strong language : — " To the influence of this distinguished man in the circle in which I

was brought up, I may owe in part the indignation which I feel towards every invasion of human rights. In my earliest years I regarded no human being with equal reverence. I have his form before me at this moment almost as distinctly as if I had seen him yesterday, so strong is the impression made on a child through the moral affections." *

While thus in an atmosphere of freedom, tempered by respect for order, the traits were developed which made him in manhood a patriot and philanthropist; yet deeper influences were unfolding William's spiritual affections. He seems from the first to have shown a bent towards the pursuit that occupied his mature years, and early earned the title of "Little Minister." When yet very small, he was wont to arrange a room with seats and desk, and to summon the family, with blows upon the warming-pan by way of a bell, to a religious meeting, where he preached with much seriousness and energy. At other times, he would assemble his playmates for a similar purpose upon the steps of the door. This development of religious sensibility may have been owing in a measure to the influence of an aunt of his father's, who was an invalid, and a woman of much piety and sweetness, to whose room the nephews and nieces went on a Sunday afternoon to read in the Bible or some good book, repeat hymns, and join in a simple prayer. At home, too, his mother was accustomed to call the children together in the best parlour, which was open only once a week, or on great occasions, and to read with them from the Scriptures. With the then prevalent views of deference due to parents, she exacted at these times a decorum which the younger

* Discourse at the Dedication of the Unitarian Congregational Church, Newport, 1836 Works, Vol. IV., p. 341.

ones found it difficult to keep; for the large room, in winter days, was cold, and they shivered in their seats; and as the wind found its way through the crannies and swelled the carpet, the house-dog would, to their great amusement, chase the waves across the floor. William, however, was always sedate. He was influenced, too, not a little by a respected confidential servant, Rachel De Gilder, a woman of masculine energy, kind, though firm, and of strong religious principle, who exerted a sway over the children, second only to their mother's, and to whom William felt a gratitude so warm that he befriended her through a long life. Rachel was a Baptist, converted and instructed by Mr. Eddy, of Newport, who was afterward known to have been a Unitarian. Her views were uncommonly cheerful; and it would be interesting to learn how far suggestive words, dropped by her in conversation, became germs in the boy's receptive heart, which ripened into the theology of his manhood.

While a spiritual life was thus taking root, and putting forth its first branches, his reason was also directed to doctrinal speculations. His grandfather Ellery was a diligent student of ecclesiastical history and of dogmatic divinity, and liked much to converse with perfect freedom upon disputed points of faith. This must of course have had its effect upon an intelligent boy like William, and he once alluded to it, saying, — "When but a mere child, I was quite a theologian, though I hated to hear my elders chop logic, according to the fashion of that controversial time." In relation to this period, he has also said, — "I can distinctly recollect unhappy influences exerted on my youthful mind by the general tone of religion in this town," — referring at once to the dry technical teaching which he

heard from the pulpit, or the dull drilling which the children weekly underwent from the Assembly's Catechism on the one side, and on the other to the profanity and jeers of infidelity which reached him in the street.

Many elevating influences, however, were around him, to which he has thus borne grateful testimony: —

"I can well remember how the name of Dr. Stiles was cherished among his parishioners, after years of separation. His visit to this place was to many a festival. When little more than a child, I was present at some of his private meetings with the more religious part of his former congregation, and I recollect how I was moved by the tears and expressive looks with which his affectionate exhortations were received. In his faith, he was what was called a moderate Calvinist; but his heart was of no sect. He carried into his religion the spirit of liberty, which then stirred the whole country. Intolerance, church tyranny, in all its forms, he abhorred. He respected the right of private judgment, where others would have thought themselves authorized to restrain it. A young man, to whom he had been as a father, one day communicated to him doubts concerning the Trinity. He expressed his sorrow, but mildly and with undiminished affection told him to go to the Scriptures, and to seek his faith there and only there. His friendships were confined to no parties. He desired to heal the wounds of the divided church of Christ, not by a common creed, but by the spirit of love. He wished to break every yoke, civil and ecclesiastical."

Of Dr. Hopkins, also, whom he used to hear preach, as well as often to meet at his father's table, and of whom ample mention will be made hereafter, he has left recollections full of affectionate respect. It was from him that he first gained his convictions of the iniquity of slavery; for this was a subject on which Dr. Hopkins, without heeding

the strong prejudices and passions enlisted on the side of wrong, bore faithful testimony from the press and the pulpit, while at the same time he labored for the education of the colored people with energy and success.

"My recollections of Dr. Hopkins," he writes, "go back to my earliest years. As the second congregational church was closed in my childhood, in consequence of Dr. Stiles's removal to New Haven, my father was accustomed to attend on the ministry of Dr. Hopkins. Perhaps he was the first minister I heard, but I heard him with no profit. His manner, which was singularly unattractive, could not win a child's attention; and the circumstances attending the service were repulsive. The church had been much injured by the British during their occupation of the town, and the congregation were too poor to repair it. It had a desolate look, and in winter the rattling of the windows made an impression which time has not worn out. It was literally 'as cold as a barn,' and some of the most painful sensations of my childhood were experienced in that comfortless building. As I grew up, I was accustomed to attend worship in our own church, where Dr. Patten was settled, so that for years I knew little of Dr. Hopkins. My first impressions were not very favorable. I think it probable that his strong reprobation of the slave-trade excited ill-will in the place, and I can distinctly recollect that the prevalence of terror in his preaching was a very common subject of remark, and gave rise to ludicrous stories among the boys." *

It was at this period, too, that he received lessons, never to be forgotten, on the virtue of temperance, from a Baptist minister, called Father Thurston. This worthy man gave striking evidence of his zeal for reforming the

* Works, Vol. IV., p. 341.

vice of drunkenness at a time when all classes of society there, as elsewhere, were debased by it, and when the citizens of Newport were largely engaged in the manufacture and traffic in ardent spirits. He was very poor, and eked out a scanty support, in addition to a small ministerial salary, by working during the week as a cooper. But though hogsheads and barrels were the articles most in demand for the West India trade, the old gentleman would make nothing but pails.

The most significant anecdote to illustrate the religious impressions made upon his mind in childhood is one thus related by himself. His father, with the view of giving him a ride, took William in his chaise one day, as he was going to hear a famous preacher in the neighbourhood. Impressed with the notion that he might learn great tidings from the unseen world, he listened attentively to the sermon. With very glowing rhetoric, the lost state of man was described, his abandonment to evil, helplessness, dependence upon sovereign grace, and the need of earnest prayer as the condition of receiving this divine aid. In the view of the speaker, a curse seemed to rest upon the earth, and darkness and horror to veil the face of nature. William, for his part, supposed that henceforth those who believed would abandon all other things to seek this salvation, and that amusement and earthly business would no longer occupy a moment. The service over, they went out of the church, and his father, in answer to the remark of some person, said, with a decisive tone, — "Sound doctrine, Sir." "It is all *true*," then, was his inward reflection. A heavy weight fell on his heart. He wanted to speak to his father; he expected his father would speak to him in relation to this tremendous crisis of things. They got into the chaise

and rode along, but, absorbed in awful thoughts, he could not raise his voice. Presently his father began to whistle ! At length they reached home ; but instead of calling the family together, and telling them of the appalling intelligence which the preacher had given, his father took off his boots, put his feet toward the fireplace, and quietly read a newspaper. All things went on as usual. At first, he was surprised ; but not being given to talking, he asked no explanations. Soon, however, the question rose, — "Could what he had heard be true ? No ! his father did not believe it ; people did not believe it ! It was *not* true !" He felt that he had been trifled with ; that the preacher had deceived him ; and from that time he became inclined to distrust every thing oratorical, and to measure exactly the meaning of words ; he had received a profound lesson on the worth of sincerity.

External aids were useful, however, in unfolding William's religious nature, only because this was so rich in high, generous, conscientious feeling. He was remarkable, from the first, for purity and self-command, and for an air of dignity, which abashed the frivolousness of rude companions, and guarded him from the familiarities of less delicate spirits. And it was well that conscience was thus early quickened, and that this mantle of modesty was wrapped about him ; for, to use his own words, there was then "a corruption of morals among those of my own age, which made boyhood a critical and perilous season."

In disposition, William was for the most part grave and reflective. He was fond of lonely rambles on the beach ; liked to go apart into some beautiful scene, with no other playmate than his kite, which he delighted in flying ; indulged in revery and contemplation, and according

to his own statement, owed the tone of his character more to the influences of solitary thought than of companionship. Indeed, he often said that he understood the happiness of childhood rather from observation than experience, that his early life was sad, that conscious want of virtue and knowledge then depressed him, that friendship seemed tame and cold, that life looked desolate, and that every year had been brighter to him than the last. But this seriousness was only the shadow of melancholy that early comes over children of ideal temper, when first the shock of contrast is felt between hope and existing facts, and from dreams of Eden youth wakes in the desert; when reverence is forced to see that the best earthly friends can fail, and conscience reveals a host of inward foes; when chivalrous honor, cherished in fancy, is confronted with actual meanness; when life presents itself as a long series of struggles or compromises, and enthusiasm holds parley with prudence, and the saddened spirit seeks, in religious aspirations, poetic visions, and communion with nature's order and freshness, solace and strength. Out of such discords, the earnest learn, as he did, to draw harmonies which make after life a hymn of praise and a triumphal march. He was testing the wealth of the inward world intrusted to his regency, learning the obligations of duty, and arming himself with love for the conquest of evil. These retiring habits did not make him morose, but taught him self-respect, the courage to deny temptation, distaste for the trivial and vulgar, and loftiness of aim.

Among his playmates he seems to have been always noted for a certain greatness of character. They called him "Peacemaker" and "Little King Pepin." He is described as having been small and delicate, yet

muscular and active, with a very erect person, quick movement, a countenance that, while sedate, was cheerful, and a singularly sweet smile, which he never lost through life. When with companions, he was exuberant in spirits, overflowing with energy, ready to join heartily in all amusements, but never boisterous. He was much beloved by the children of the school and neighbourhood, though even then acting as an exhorter; for he used to rebuke among them all profaneness or obscenity. But this was done with a gentle tone, that manifested rather sorrow than anger, and was well received. His character was thus early marked by mingled strength and sweetness, though by some accounts it would appear that he was by no means free from irritability. He loved power, too; and such was his sway, among even the quarrelsome, that when his voice was heard, persuading them to order, he was readily obeyed. Sufficient fire, however, was latent under his mildness to give him energy. On one occasion he flogged a boy larger than himself, who had imposed, as he thought, upon one weaker. And on another, when the pupils of Mr. Rogers's school had collected in expectation of an attack from the boys of a different part of the town, William urged them to go and meet the others and settle the matter at once; he disapproved of delay and mere talking. He was a remarkable wrestler also, excelled in pitching the quoit, liked adventurous sports, was fond of climbing to the masthead of vessels at the wharf, and once, when sliding rapidly down a stay, narrowly escaped being dashed on deck, the swift descent tearing the skin from his hands. Through life, indeed, he had unflinching physical as well as moral courage, and seemed unconscious of fear. One anecdote may serve to show how early this intrepidity

was manifested. In those days the good people of Newport were very superstitious, — as was the case, in fact, generally throughout the country, — and a vessel lying in the stream had the reputation of being haunted. All manner of rumors were spread as to strange noises and doings on board. To throw ridicule on the prevailing panic, William proposed to pass the night in her. But though he anxiously desired it, his friends forbade his going, — of course, not from belief in ghosts, but from fear of injury that might be done to him through wantonness or ill design. He was officer, too, it seems, in a company of boys that marched to salute Count Rochambeau when he was on a visit at Newport, upon which occasion the young commander made an address, and marshalled his troop, with a spirit that won much admiration.

If these trifling mementos indicate a generous and high-spirited character, there are others which illustrate his thoughtfulness and disinterestedness. Among them, one may be worth noting, because it proves that he had instinctively adopted in early years the rule which strictly governed his manhood, of "letting not his left hand know what his right hand did." A man sick and in distress begged one day at the door. William observed him, but was silent and gave nothing at the time. When the beggar had gone, however, he was seen to follow him out, and to put into his hand some pieces of money, which must have been all that he had. It is remembered, too, that he used to visit a friendless and desolate old man in the neighbourhood, carrying with him such comforts as he could command; and interest generally in the poor, deference for the aged, and considerate regard for the feelings and rights of domes-

tics in the family, gained for him the warm affection due to the liberal and loving.

The same gentle and kind disposition manifested itself in his treatment of animals, as, in a letter written soon after leaving college, he thus himself declares: —

"Thanks to my stars, I can say I have never killed a bird. I would not crush the meanest insect which crawls upon the ground. They have the same right to life that I have, they received it from the same Father, and I will not mar the works of God by wanton cruelty.

"I can remember an incident in my childhood, which has given a turn to my whole life and character. I found a nest of birds in my father's field, which held four young ones. They had no down when I first discovered them. They opened their little mouths as if they were hungry, and I gave them some crumbs which were in my pocket. Every day I returned to feed them. As soon as school was done, I would run home for some bread, and sit by the nest to see them eat, for an hour at a time. They were now feathered, and almost ready to fly. When I came one morning, I found them all cut up into quarters. The grass round the nest was red with blood. Their little limbs were raw and bloody. The mother was on a tree, and the father on the wall, mourning for their young. I cried, myself, for I was a child. I thought, too, that the parents looked on me as the author of their miseries, and this made me still more unhappy. I wanted to undeceive them. I wanted to sympathize with and comfort them. When I left the field, they followed me with their eyes and with mournful reproaches. I was too young and too sincere in my grief to make any apostrophes. But I can never forget my feelings. The impression will never be worn away, nor can I ever cease to abhor every species of inhumanity towards inferior animals."

In connection with this letter, and as illustrating his

sympathy with the lower creation, it is remembered that he reared, while quite young, a brood of chickens, devoting himself to them with the tenderest care ; and that once, seeing in a trap some rats which were to be drowned, he was so much affected by their evident distress; that he opened the door and let them go.

This sketch of William's boyhood cannot be more fitly closed than with the following letter from his friend in youth, and friend till death, our poet-painter, Washington Allston.

" I know not that I could better describe him than as an *open*, *brave*, *and generous boy*. The characters of boys are, I believe, almost always truly estimated by their companions, — at least morally, though perhaps seldom intellectually ; and these are generally assigned to the several classes of the open or the cunning, the generous or the mean, the brave or the cowardly. And I well remember, though he was several months my junior (a matter of some importance among children), that I always looked up to him even in boyhood with respect ; nor can I recall a single circumstance that ever weakened that feeling. In our games, he was never known to take any undue advantage, but would give way at once, where there was the least doubt on the point at issue. And though he was but scantily provided with pocket-money, his little chance supplies seemed, in the schoolboy phrase, always to " burn in his pocket " ; he could neither keep it there, nor ever expend it wholly on himself. On one occasion, when quite a little boy, he had a present from a relative of a dollar. Such an excess of wealth was never before in his possession ; and I can now bring before me the very expression of glee with which he came among us, to disencumber himself of the load. This is the only incident that I can now recall, and this must have been full fifty years ago. He had

the same large heart when a boy, that animated him to the last. His intellectual endowments are known to the world; but only his early companions, who have survived him, can bear witness to the rare uniformity of his moral worth; man and boy, he was, in their true sense, high-minded and noble-hearted."

At the age of twelve, William was sent to New London, to prepare for college, under the care of his uncle, the Rev. Henry Channing. And it was while he was residing there, that, on the 21st of September, 1793, his father died. He was sent for home; and an aged friend of the family still describes the deep and general sympathy called out by the appearance of the funeral, when Francis, the eldest son, then in college, and William, now a boy of thirteen years, with their widowed mother and the younger children, followed the coffin of their beloved and universally honored parent through the streets of Newport.

This death made a momentous change in the condition of the family, and threw a heavy load of responsibility on the elder sons; for the father, though most industrious in his profession, and engaged in large business, had been thus far able to lay up but a small property; and the mother, though wise and energetic, found herself oppressed with a weight of care, in the charge of nine children. It is easy to see that the effect of such a loss upon a boy full of sensibility, conscientious and resolute, like William, must have been to stimulate him to the exercise of every power, and to the most rapid preparation for a time when he might maintain himself and assist his family. From easy independence and cheering worldly prospects, he and his had suddenly become poor; and at the earliest moment it was necessary that he should free his mother

from the burden of his support. More than that, the head of the house was taken; and he and his elder brother must now become their mother's advisers, and guardians of those younger. The character of independent energy, and thoughtful oversight for every member of his family, thus early awakened, grew stronger through life. Doubtless, however, a shade of premature seriousness was given to his temper. The effect of this bereavement is shown by an extract from a letter of his grandfather Ellery, who says: —

"Your letters have afforded me great delight, for they have all discovered that affectionate regard for your mother, your brothers and sisters, and your other relatives, which naturally flows from a feeling and ingenuous mind, and indicates an amiable disposition."

His brother, too, writes: —

"The goodness of heart which you possess will, I doubt not, ever keep you desirous of liberating our mother from her cares. Pass with her all the moments you can steal from healthful recreations and necessary studies, and let the kind attentions of filial affection be a return for the unrequitable tenderness, which we, her beloved children, have received. Your brothers and sisters esteem you for your friendly disposition. Yes, William, you are happy in possessing the good-will of all."

At New London he remained a year and more; and his uncle, writing to him soon after he entered college, thus describes the impression which his character and conduct had left: —

"It gave me sensible pleasure to find you, my dear nephew, retaining the same animated sensibility which rendered you capable of receiving and communicating happiness, and secured you cordial welcome while resident in my family.

Your aunt loves you tenderly, and often expresses her feelings while recounting your affectionate respect and attention. Never did you excite one painful emotion in our breasts, but always with you our hearts were made glad. We never can forget such a nephew, or rather such a son."

That he was earnest and successful in his studies also appears by the following extract from another letter of his uncle, who was his instructor : —

"Without flattery, I can only say that your progress was more the result of your assiduity than of my attention.

"I am pleased with your observations upon the expectations of your friends and your determination to endeavour to realize them. We know that your situation and your genius justify us in forming the most flattering ideas of the future eminence of our nephew. . . . . Permit me to indulge the hope that you will continue to possess and cherish that modesty and deference to superiors which has hitherto been a distinguishing trait in your character."

These were strong words of praise to draw from one singularly exacting of courteous respect, and who, though kind in heart, was severely precise in manners. To this uncle he owed much in every way, and especially for the tone given to his religious feelings. Mr. Henry Channing had then been settled for many years in New London ; and amid the gloomy Calvinism of Connecticut had preserved a spirit free and bright, cheerful in hope and utterly intolerant of bigotry. New London was in the midst of one of the "Revivals," which then were quite generally oversweeping New England. And Mr. Channing, though of the more liberal body, sympathized so far in the excitement, that a new spiritual interest was awakened in his own society, and the mind of William received such deep and lasting impressions, that

he dated back to that period the commencement of a decidedly religious life. His feelings towards New London were, in consequence of this era in his inward experience, always strong, and we find a college classmate writing to him thus on the occasion of his revisiting it: — "I hope that the poor pilgrim has ere this trod on the consecrated ground of Palestine. New London you view with a partial eye, as the place where you acquired those habits of virtue and morality which have always influenced your conduct. Pleasant it must be to retrace these scenes of former times."

From New London William went to Cambridge, Massachusetts, where he entered Harvard College as Freshman, in 1794, being then in his fifteenth year. And thus closed a boyhood, that in its elements and results, in the blending of generous impulses and fine powers with high principle and pure habits, gave promise of greatness, which the future was amply to redeem.

CHAPTER III.

COLLEGE LIFE.

ÆT. 14–18. 1794–1798.

In tracing the growth of William's mind and character during the important period of college life, it is of interest to understand the influences which surrounded him; and of these a graphic sketch is presented in the following letter from his classmate and friend, Judge Story.*

"You express a desire 'to obtain some general views of the circumstances under which the students lived.' I believe that this can be best done by giving you a brief sketch of the state of college, and the relation which the students had with the existing college government. Things are so much changed since, that it is somewhat difficult to realize all the influences which then surrounded them. In the first place, as to the course of studies. It was far more confined and limited than at present. In Greek, we studied Xenophon's Anabasis, and a few Books of the Iliad; in Latin, Sallust and a few Books of Livy; in Mathematics, Saunderson's Algebra, and a work on Arithmetic; in Natural Philosophy, Enfield's Natural Philosophy and Ferguson's Astronomy; in Rhetoric, an abridgment of Blair's Lectures, and the article on Rhetoric in the 'Preceptor'; in Metaphysics, Watts's Logic, and Locke on the Human Understanding; in History, Millot's Elements; in Theology, Doddridge's Lectures; in grammatical studies, Lowth's Grammar. I believe this is near the whole, if not the

* Letter to W. F. Channing.

whole, course of our systematical studies. The College Library was at that time far less comprehensive and suited to the wants of students than at present. It was not as easily accessible; and, indeed, was not frequented by them. No modern language was taught, except French, and that only one day in the week by a non-resident instructor.

"The means of knowledge from external sources was very limited. The intercourse between us and foreign countries was infrequent; and I might almost say that we had no means of access to any literature and science, except the English. Even in respect to this, we had little more than a semi-annual importation of the most common works; and a few copies supplied and satisfied the market. The English periodicals were then few in number; and I do not remember any one that was read by the students, except the Monthly Magazine (the old Monthly), and that was read but by a few. I have spoken of our semi-annual importations; and it is literally true, that two ships only plied as regular packets between Boston and London, one in the spring and one in the autumn, and their arrival was an era in our college life.

"In respect to academical intercourse, the students had literally none that was not purely official, except with each other. The different classes were almost strangers to each other; and cold reserve generally prevailed between them. The system of 'fagging' (as it was called) was just then dying out, and I believe that my own class was the first that was not compelled to perform this drudgery at the command of the Senior class, in the most humble services. The students had no connection whatsoever with the inhabitants of Cambridge by private social visits. There was none between the families of the president and professors of the college and the students. The *régime* of the old school in manners and habits then prevailed. The presi-

dent and professors were never approached except in the most formal way, and upon official occasions; and in the college yard (if I remember rightly) no student was permitted to be with his hat on, if one of the professors was there. President Willard was a sound scholar, of great dignity of manners, but cold and somewhat forbidding in his demeanour. Professor Tappan belonged to the old school of theology, and had much of the grave courtesy of the clergymen of that school. Professor Webber was modest, mild, and quiet, but unconquerably reserved and staid. Professor Pearson was an excellent critic, but somewhat severe and exact in his requirements; and I think we all greatly profited by his instructions, even when we thought them not delivered in the most gentle accents. Our tutors were young men, and I must add that they were most diligent and conscientious in their duties. Some of them must be known to you, for they are still living. Mr., afterwards Professor, Popkin, Mr., afterwards Professor, Hedge, and Mr., now Rev. Dr., Pierce of Brookline. I must do all our instructors, the professors as well as the tutors, the justice to say, that their instructions were very valuable to us, and that they all took a deep and earnest interest in our advancement. For myself, I must own that at this distant day I entertain the liveliest gratitude to them for the aid given by them to me in awakening and guiding my love of letters. But private social access to them did not belong to the habits of the times, and a free and easy intercourse with them, which would now not be considered unbecoming, would at that time have been thought somewhat obtrusive on one side, and, on the other, would have exposed the student to the imputation of being what in technical language was called a 'fisherman,' — a rank and noxious character in college annals.

"These suggestions may at once put you in possession of the *intra-mœnial* influences of college life. In general,

the students were then moral, devoted to their studies, and ambitious of distinction. There would be then, as now, an occasional outbreak; but I am not aware that either immorality, or dissipation, or habitual indolence was more in fashion than in succeeding times. There will always be a little sprinkling of these among students of an ardent and reckless character. In one particular a salutary change in the habits of life has taken place. There is universally far more temperance now than then, in the use of wine and spirituous liquors. But the instances of excess were rare; and were always frowned upon by classmates.

"Passing from what may be deemed the interior influences of college life, I would say a few words as to those which were exterior. And here the principal inquiry would undoubtedly be, What was the influence of the metropolis in the immediate neighbourhood? I have no difficulty in saying, that it was very slight indeed, compared with what Boston now exerts with so much potency and variety of operation. The intercourse between the students and Boston was, when my class entered college, infrequent and casual. West-Boston bridge had been completed but a short period before; the road was then new and not well settled; the means of communication from Cambridge were almost altogether by walking; and the inducements to visit in private circles far less attractive than at present. Social intercourse with the young, and especially with students, was not much cultivated; and invitations to social parties in Boston rarely extended to college circles. The literature and science, the taste, and talent, and learning, now so abundantly found in that interesting city, have been in a great measure the growth of later times; and the result is the gradual progress of wealth and refinement, and a more comprehensive education. If the college in this way lost much of the advantage arising from the zeal, and ambition, and brilliant eloquence of later days, it is but just to add

that it escaped also some of the dangerous allurements which now surround the paths of the young on every side.

"Now, from what I have ventured to suggest, I believe, that, during the collegiate life of your father, the exterior influences of the literature and science and social refinements of Boston were not of a nature to bear much upon his habits and pursuits.

"There is one circumstance, however, which is here brought to my thoughts, on which I would for a moment dwell, because I am quite sure that it gave a powerful impulse to his ambition. At that period, all the scholars of the class attended together in the recitation-room at the same time, and of course recited their lessons in the presence of each other. The average number in the classes did not generally vary in any important degree from the numbers now in college, — at least, not to a degree which would even now make the assemblage of the whole class in the same room inconvenient or burdensome. This general assemblage of the whole class in the same room at the same time had, in my judgment, the most beneficial influence. In the first place, it enabled the whole class clearly and accurately to ascertain the relative scholarship and attainments of each scholar; and thus one great source of jealousy, the suspicion of partiality on the part of the college faculty, was either extinguished or greatly mitigated, and I do not hesitate to say that the relative rank then assigned to the various members of the class by their own classmates was generally correct, impartial, and satisfactory. In the next place, a generous spirit of emulation pervaded the whole class. We were proud of our best scholars, and awarded them just praise with a liberal courtesy; and those who were thus distinguished were stimulated by high motives to deserve and to secure this approbation. No man, I am persuaded, felt more, or appreciated more justly, than your father, this truly valuable incentive to exertion. He

had then, as in his after life, a lofty ambition for excellence ; and he sought reputation by aims as pure and moral as they were enlightened. I must confess that I have never ceased to regret, that the old system, the advantages of which I have thus briefly alluded to, has ever been departed from in the college arrangements. If this were the proper time or place, I would state many reasons why I hold this opinion, and which, at least in my own judgment, make the change more than a doubtful innovation."

It was amid these influences and opportunities, that William's genius and faculties were to be matured. He was now in his fifteenth year, vigorous in health, elastic in spirits, in temper, as we have seen, enthusiastic yet self-governed, with powers active and well disciplined ; and thus in every way fitted to enter upon this critical era of life. All who then remember him speak with especial pleasure of his animated expression, of his buoyant yet dignified manner, and of his general appearance of overflowing life. Washington Allston writes : —

"Though small in stature, his person at that time was rather muscular than slender ; I should think it was even athletic, from the manner in which he prolonged the contests with heavier antagonists, in the wrestling matches that were then common among the students. And for animal spirits he was no less remarkable than for his intellectual enthusiasm ; amounting occasionally to unrestrained hilarity, but never passing the bounds of propriety. I well remember his *laugh*, which could not have been heartier without being obstreperous."

This laughter is said to have been not rarely called out by this very friend, who, possessed of the most radiant humor, penetration, and sweetness, charming from his courtesy of manner and nobleness of feeling, en-

dowed with an imagination that threw a lustre round every theme he touched, was then, as through life, a centre of attraction to all who could appreciate rare genius, eloquence, and refinement almost feminine in delicacy. Allston's room was on the way from the house where William lived to the college ; and there he used to stop for friendly chat, while going to or coming from the lecture-room. One day, he had a lesson to be accompanied with original designs in mensuration, and Allston, who was already skilful in the use of his pencil, proposed to give him an illustration. It consisted of pyramids of figures heaped upon one another's shoulders in various attitudes, each of which was a slightly caricatured portrait of the professors and tutors. This William offered at recitation ; and the drawing was so spirited and the jest in itself so harmless, that the instructor could not but join heartily with the class in the merriment it excited. This slight anecdote is mentioned, because it indicates a latent vein of humor, which, though hidden in after years under a manner habitually serious, did yet occasionally emit scintillations.

The Rev. Dr. Peirce, who was then his tutor, adds the following description of William as a student : —

" I have a distinct recollection of him, as, at that time, a fine looking, healthy, muscular young man. But what I best remember was his excellence as a scholar. My department was the Latin language ; and never shall I forget, while memory lasts, with what promptitude and elegance he rendered into English the passages from the classics which he was called to recite. I also heard his class in History. He was always in his place ; and I invariably gave him the highest mark for good recitations. The government of the University were, I believe, unanimous in

assigning him the first rank among his classmates. This, in a class containing such men as Judge Story, William Williams, Artemas Sawyer, Joseph Emerson, Dr. Tuckerman, &c., was no small honor."

The classmate, from whom has been already quoted the sketch of the influences which surrounded the students, thus beautifully completes his friend's portrait as he was in college : —

"I became a member," writes Judge Story, "of the same class in January, 1795, and was then first introduced to him. He resided during the whole of his collegiate course with his uncle, whose house was at some distance from the colleges ; and partly from this fact, and partly from his reserved, although bland, deportment, he did not associate much with his classmates generally, at the same time that he drew about him a circle of choice and select friends from the most distinguished of his class, with whom he indulged in the most frank, social intercourse, and by whom he was greatly beloved and respected. So blameless was his life, so conciliatory his manners, and so unobtrusive his conduct, that he enjoyed the rare felicity of being universally esteemed by all his classmates, even by those to whom he was least known except in the lecture-room as a fellow-student. The little strifes, and jealousies, and rivalries of college life, in those days, scarcely reached him ; and his own rank in scholarship was, from the beginning to the conclusion of his academical career, admitted to be of the highest order. I do not believe that he had a single personal enemy during that whole period, and I am sure that he never deserved to have any ; and his early reputation, as it budded, and blossomed, and bore its fruits, was cherished by all his class as common property. We were proud of his distinctions, and gratified when he was praised. We all then prophesied his future eminence, in whatever pro-

fession he should make his choice. Speaking for myself, I can truly say, that the qualities of mind and character, which then were unfolded to my own view, were precisely the same which in after life gave him such celebrity.

"Perhaps in no single study was he superior to all his classmates. In the classical studies of that day he was among the first, if not the first; in Latin more accomplished than in Greek. For mathematics and metaphysics he had little relish. He performed the prescribed tasks in these subjects with care and diligence, but with no ambition for distinction, or pride of purpose. His principal love was for historical and literary studies; for English literature in its widest extent, and for those comprehensive generalizations upon human life, institutions, and interests, which his enthusiasm for the advancement of his race and his purity of heart led him to cherish and cultivate with profound attachment. I remember well with what a kindling zeal he spoke on all such subjects; and one might almost then see playing about him the gentle graces and the rapt devotion of a Fénelon.

"In one particular he far excelled all his classmates, and I mention it because it is precisely that which in after life constituted the basis of his fame; — I mean his power of varied and sustained written composition. It was racy, flowing, full, glowing with life, chaste in ornament, vigorous in structure, and beautiful in finish. It abounded with eloquence of expression, — the spontaneous effusion of a quick genius and a cultivated taste, — and was as persuasive as it was imposing. All of us — by which I mean his academical contemporaries — listened to his discourses at the literary exhibitions, and at commencement, with admiration and delight. If I might venture to rely on the impressions of those days, which yet fasten on my memory as truths unaffected by youthful excitement, I should be tempted to say that we all listened to him on these occa-

sions with the most devoted attention; and that the mellifluous tones of his voice fell on our ears with somewhat of the power which Milton has attributed to Adam when the angel ended, so

> 'That we awhile
> Thought him still speaking, still stood fixed to hear.

I need scarcely add, that at the public exhibitions of his class he received the first and highest part; and on receiving his degree at commencement, took also the first and highest oration, with the approval of all his class, that he was the worthiest of it, and that he was truly *princeps inter pares.* Honors thus early won and conceded are not without their value or their use as prognostics of an auspicious and brilliant day."

It will please the generous to know, that, while Judge Story thus so clearly bore testimony to his friend's preëminence as a scholar, Dr. Channing was equally decided in assigning the first place of honor to his distinguished classmate. He often said, "Judge Story was entitled to the first part; but he chose a poem, and the oration fell to me."

It may be encouraging to students, also, to learn that young Channing did not gain the charm of style referred to, without effort. He said that his first attempts were most awkward, and that he accustomed himself to compose mentally while walking to and from the college. He also studied elocution and rhetoric as an art, with the aid of Longinus, Harris, Watts, and Sheridan. He met friends, too, in private, to read and criticize each other's writings. Above all, he zealously took a part in the various literary societies, of his connection with which the Hon. D. A. White of Salem, who, though in the class before Channing, yet knew him well, has communicated the following detailed account.

"His connection with these societies could not fail to have an important influence in his education, — scarcely less, perhaps, taken in all its bearings, than the established course of college studies. The literary exercises and the social communion which these societies afforded were happily suited to the development of his fine powers and ardent sympathies, his free and independent spirit, his social, friendly, and benevolent heart. You will, therefore, be interested, I think, to know something of them.

"The first literary society in which we met as members was the Speaking Club, since called the Institute of 1770, the principal object of which was mutual improvement in elocution and oratory. The society consisted of members from the two middle classes, twelve to fifteen from each chosen near the close of the Freshman year, and retiring at the close of the Junior year, with a valedictory address from one of the members previously appointed for the purpose. I find 'Channing' first mentioned among those chosen from his class. Young as he was, he was also elected their president. To show the impression which at that early period he made upon me, and I doubt not equally upon others, I may observe, what I now distinctly remember, that, in delivering the valedictory address in behalf of the members from my class, as my eye rested on him, I felt a respect for his taste and judgment, for his authority in criticism, which no other auditor inspired. I might apply the same remark to another occasion afterwards, in a different society, when I stood in a similar relation to him. The authority which he thus early acquired among us arose not more from his general reputation as a scholar and critic, than from the active part which he took in all our meetings, and the sound judgment and earnest eloquence which often distinguished his remarks. His whole deportment and conversation among his associates tended to the same result. With his natural ardor and enthusiasm were united so much dignity and

sweetness of manner and disposition, that it was impossible to be acquainted with him, however transiently, without feeling for him a sincere respect and esteem.

"The practice of the Speaking Club at their meetings, which were held in the evening at some retired room in the town of Cambridge, was, for a portion of the members to declaim in rotation, while each declaimer, after his performance, stood aside to receive the remarks which any of his brethren might think proper to offer. All apparent faults of the speaker, which he might correct, or which others should avoid, were freely pointed out and commented upon, yet always in a spirit of candor and kindness. Sometimes different views would be taken by various members, giving rise to interesting discussions. Thus these meetings became schools of mutual improvement in extemporaneous speaking, as well as correct elocution. No one could be better qualified to be both teacher and learner in such schools than young Channing. Full of life and energy, and actuated alike by an ardent love of knowledge and by social benevolence, his noble powers of thought and feeling were never suffered to sleep when any intellectual or moral good was attainable for himself or others.

"But improvement in public speaking was not the only, nor indeed the chief, advantage derived from being a member of this society. The general influence upon an ingenuous young man, arising from a liberal intercourse with so many of the most intelligent and virtuous scholars of various classes, engaged in a course of interesting exercises for their common benefit, could scarcely be too highly appreciated. His interest in the proper objects of education would be increased, and his motives and views elevated above all unworthy pursuits, while he enjoyed the best means of knowing the real character of his most respectable classmates, and wisely forming those friendships which naturally spring from college intimacies, and which, when wisely formed, become blessings through life.

"Nearly at the same time that Mr. Channing left the Speaking Club, he was chosen into the society of the Phi Beta Kappa, and continued to enjoy, during his Senior year, the advantages of an intimate literary intercourse with the distinguished scholars of his own class. You are too well acquainted with the character of this society, which has always been a public one, to make it necessary for me to say any thing more about it than to give a general idea of the literary exercises and discussions which engaged the attention of its resident members at their regular meetings, during the last year at college. The object of these meetings was improvement in English composition, the art of reasoning, and the practice of speaking; and the principal exercises were dissertations and forensic arguments, previously written, and read at the meetings, with occasional debates and colloquial discussions.

"There was another society, of a similar intellectual character, into which Channing was elected, called the Adelphi, instituted in 1785, designed for religious improvement, but consisting principally of those members of the Senior class who expected to study theology as a profession. Their meetings were held on Sunday evenings, and their exercises, which were of a devotional and religious character, were chiefly dissertations, or discourses, and discussions on topics connected with theology and the clerical profession.*

"The Hasty-Pudding Club, composed of members of the Junior class, was formed more exclusively for social enjoyment and recreation. It originated with my class in 1795, at the beginning of our Junior year, numbering about twenty associates. Being transmitted to the next class, as they commenced Juniors, it became a permanent institution. I

* Channing delivered before this society a discourse, which was so much liked, that he was strongly urged by his fellows to print it.

well remember the animating presence of Channing among those to whom we committed the society on the delivery of first anniversary address. The name of the club sufficiently shows the simplicity of the entertainment originally produced at their meetings, which were held on Saturday evenings, and appropriately closed with a hymn sung to the tune of St. Martin's.

"Discussions and debates were soon introduced at these meetings, and the society during the first year assumed a more literary and interesting character, becoming, in fact, a source of mutual improvement as well as enjoyment. Nothing could be more pure and rational than the pleasure and recreation which the members of this society enjoyed together.

"There was another social club, of a few years' longer standing, and of a more luxurious and convivial cast, — as its original name, the Porcellian, would seem to indicate, — into which Channing had the honor to be elected, but which could never have been congenial with his nature; and if he joined in its meetings at all, he soon abandoned them altogether.

"The three first-named societies, though rich in social and intellectual gratifications, were really working societies; and, during the three most important years of college life, served admirably well to occupy a portion of the leisure hours which the more industrious and gifted students found upon their hands, after fully attending to the course of studies and exercises then required by the laws of the University.

"The course of prescribed studies and exercises, together with those voluntarily pursued in the several societies now described, and the miscellaneous reading enjoyed by almost every student, afforded, if not a complete, yet a very excellent, system of instruction. It gave at least the bones and sinews and muscles, with much of the filling out, and

something of the embellishment, of a sound and healthy education.

"To a young man of an ardent, social temperament, and original turn of thought, as well as a highly gifted mind and independent spirit of inquiry, it was especially desirable that the whole of his time at college should not be covered by the prescribed course of studies, but that a liberal portion of it should be left at his own disposal.

"The arrangement of the college exercises was then so wisely ordered, that the morning of every day, after the breakfast hour, was almost wholly left, to the two upper classes especially, for uninterrupted study. Having thus secured to them the best hours of the day for close and vigorous application to study, — the best, certainly, both for the acquisition of knowledge and the development and discipline of the intellectual faculties, — and having the evening also at their command, whether for study, or the enjoyment of its most interesting results at their literary meetings, they had ample time for all their prescribed and voluntary exercises and pursuits, with the most animating motives to diligent and persevering application. I cannot, therefore, easily imagine a more eligible situation for young Channing than the one he enjoyed while a student in Harvard College, — considering, too, his peculiar advantage of living in the family of his uncle, the late Chief Justice Dana, where the want of refined domestic society, the principal defect of an academic residence, was so entirely supplied to him. Most faithfully did he improve the various privileges he enjoyed, — making, undoubtedly, more rapid progress in good learning and intellectual accomplishments than any of his fellow-students, or than he himself ever made in any other equal portion of his life."

Thus far a view has been offered of the general influences, only, which helped to form young Channing's

mind. But far more fruitful germs were planted in him by the religious and social excitements of the time, which were scattering, as by the hands of the tempest, the seeds of new views of man, society, and human life. He has fortunately left the following mementos of the power which this stirring period exerted upon himself : —

" College was never in a worse state than when I entered it. Society was passing through a most critical stage. The French Revolution had diseased the imagination and unsettled the understanding of men everywhere. The old foundations of social order, loyalty, tradition, habit, reverence for antiquity, were everywhere shaken, if not subverted. The authority of the past was gone. The old forms were outgrown, and new ones had not taken their place. The tone of books and conversation was presumptuous and daring. The tendency of all classes was to skepticism. At such a moment, the difficulties of education were necessarily multiplied. The work required men of comprehensive and original minds, able to adapt themselves to the new state of the world. It is not to be wondered at, that the government and teachers of the college, most of them of mature years, and belonging to the old school, should understand little of the wants of the times. The system of government and instruction went on very much as it had done for years before, and the result was a state of great insubordination, and the almost total absence of the respect due to individuals of so much worth. The state of morals among the students was any thing but good ; but poverty, a dread of debt, well-chosen friends, the pleasures of intellectual improvement, regard to my surviving parent, and an almost instinctive shrinking from gross vice, to which natural timidity and religious principle contributed not a little, proved effectual safeguards. I look back on the innocence of my

early life with no self-complacency, and with no disposition to exalt myself above those who yielded to temptation, and among whom I doubt not were much nobler characters than my own. But I do recollect it with great satisfaction and with fervent gratitude to Divine Providence. Had the bounds of purity once been broken, I know not that I should ever have returned to virtue."

Judge White bears a similar testimony. He writes:—

"To give you some idea of the lively interest taken in these subjects by him and the students generally at that time, I will copy a passage respecting it from my journal.—'When I entered college, the French Revolution had broken up the foundations of religion and morals as well as government, and continued to rage for some years with its utmost fury, spreading its disastrous influence throughout the civilized world, and pouring upon our country a flood of infidel and licentious principles. Our colleges could not escape the contagion of these principles; and I have no doubt that to these, and the pernicious books embodying them, much of the disorderly conduct, and most of the infidel and irreligious spirit, which prevailed at that period among the students at Cambridge, may justly be attributed. The patrons and governors of the college made efforts to counteract the effect of these fatal principles by exhortation, and preaching, and prayer, as well as by the publication and distribution of good books and pamphlets.

"'Watson's Apology for the Bible, in answer to Paine's Age of Reason, was published or furnished for the students at college by the corporation in 1796, and every one of them was presented with a copy. So deeply and so generally had the French *mania* seized upon the popular mind in this country, and so susceptible of its fiery influence were the ardent spirits of young men, all alive to freedom of thought, of action, and indulgence, that reason, argument,

and persuasion had for a time no power against it. Its own horrible manifestation of itself at length gave them power to overcome it, and scholars as well as people were roused from their delusion, and brought to look back upon it with shame and amazement.' "

It was the native tone of young Channing's spirit, however, which made these movements of the age instructive to him. Judge Story most justly adds : —

"From what has been already stated, you will readily be enabled to comprehend the general influences, the genius of the place, which surrounded your father during his college life. If I were to venture, however, upon giving an opinion upon such a subject, necessarily conjectural, I should say that there were few or none, of an external character, either powerful or active. What he then was, was mainly owing to the impulses of his own mind and heart, — warm, elevated, ambitious of distinction, pure, and energetic. His associations were with the best scholars of his class. His friendships were mainly confined to them. He neither loved nor courted the idle or the indifferent ; and with the vicious he had no communion of pursuit or feeling. He then loved popularity, but it was the popularity (as has been well said on another occasion) that follows, and is not sought after. It is that which is won by the pursuit of noble ends by noble means. But I cannot help thinking that external influences were not those which mainly contributed to fix the character of his life. The influences which seem to me to have regulated his pursuits, his taste, his feelings, and his principles, were chiefly from within ; — the workings of genius upon large materials, a deep and wakeful sensibility, an ardent love of truth and moral purity, a conscience quickened and chastened by an earnest sense of religious obligation, and a spirit elevated by a warm interest in the human race."

And this leads to what was his most vital experience in college. The more his character and mind matured, the more earnestly did he devote himself to aspirations after moral greatness. He read with delight the Stoics, and was profoundly moved by the stern purity which they inculcated. But the two authors who most served to guide his thoughts at this period were Hutcheson and Ferguson. It was while reading, one day, in the former, some of the various passages in which he asserts man's capacity for disinterested affection, and considers virtue as the sacrifice of private interests and the bearing of private evils for the public good, or as self-devotion to absolute, universal good, that there suddenly burst upon his mind that view of the dignity of human nature, which was ever after to "uphold and cherish" him, and thenceforth to be "the fountain light of all his day, the master light of all his seeing." He was, at the time, walking as he read, beneath a clump of willows yet standing in the meadow a little to the north of Judge Dana's. This was his favorite retreat for study, being then quite undisturbed and private, and offering a most serene and cheerful prospect across green meadows and the glistening river to the Brookline hills. The place and the hour were always sacred in his memory, and he frequently referred to them with grateful awe. It seemed to him, that he then passed through a new spiritual birth, and entered upon the day of eternal peace and joy. The glory of the Divine disinterestedness, the privilege of existing in a universe of progressive order and beauty, the possibilities of spiritual destiny, the sublimity of devotedness to the will of Infinite Love, penetrated his soul; and he was so borne away in rapturous visions,

that, to quote his own words, as spoken to a friend in later years, — "I longed to die, and felt as if heaven alone could give room for the exercise of such emotions; but when I found I must live, I cast about to do something worthy of these great thoughts; and my enthusiasm at that age, being then but fifteen, turning strongly to the female sex, I considered that they were the powers which ruled the world, and that, if they would bestow their favor on the right cause only, and never be diverted by caprice, all would be fitly arranged, and triumph was sure. Animated with this view, which unfolded itself with great rapidity and in many bearings, I sat down and wrote to this lady," — laying his hand upon his wife's arm, who was listening by his side, — "but I never got courage to send the letter, and have it yet." This holy hour was but the first wind-flower of the spring, however, the opening of a long series of experiences by which he was to be led up to perfect consecration. It is a significant fact, that in this time of exaltation, when the young moral knight-errant took his vow of fidelity and was girt with the sword of love, his heart should have instinctively sought the concert in action of woman. This faith in her power of disinterested virtue, so early felt, grew always stronger; and if disappointment in the characters and deeds of men made him ever falter for a moment in his generous aims, he found his hope and heroism renewed by woman's purity and earnestness.

As Hutcheson was the medium of awakening within him the consciousness of an exhaustless tendency in the human soul to moral perfection, so Ferguson on Civil Society was the means of concentrating his energies upon the thought of social progress. Years afterwards, his

remembrance of the enthusiasm in the cause of humanity, first called out in him by this book, was so strong, that he recommended it in terms which would certainly be thought by most readers greatly to exaggerate its merits. But it is instructive thus to learn the agency whence the mind and will of a man who in after life made himself so widely felt received their peculiar direction. In his Junior year he had already become a moral and social reformer.

In the letter describing his classmate's position as a student, Judge Story says he had but little relish for mathematics and metaphysics. This was, however, a misconception, and is contradicted by his own explicit statements. Indeed, his taste was prematurely developed for philosophical investigation. His very earliest attempt at sustained composition was an essay on Electricity; and his love of natural science was always strong. He delighted, too, in geometry, and felt so rare a pleasure in the perfection of its demonstrations, that he took the fifth book of Euclid with him as an entertainment during one vacation. In relation to this point, his classmate, W. Williams, writes: —

"The Sophomore year gave us Euclid to measure our strength. Many halted at the '*pons asinorum.*' But Channing could go over clear at the first trial, as could some twelve or fifteen of us. This fact is stated to show that he had a mind able to comprehend the abstrusities of mathematics, though to my apprehension he excelled more decidedly in the Latin and Greek classics, and had a stronger inclination to polite literature."

But it was man's spiritual nature and relations which chiefly attracted his attention. He carefully studied, at this time, Locke, Berkeley, Reid, Hume, Priestley, and

especially Price. And while reading Jouffroy, in 1840, he said to a friend, — "I have found here a fact which interests me personally very much. Jouffroy says that Dr. Price's Dissertations were translated into German at the time of their first appearance, and produced a much greater impression there than they did in England; and he thinks they were the first movers of the German mind in the transcendental direction. Now, I read Price when I was in college. Price saved me from Locke's Philosophy. He gave me the doctrine of ideas, and during my life I have written the words Love, Right, &c., with a capital. That book probably moulded my philosophy into the form it has always retained."

One other intellectual influence, which took strong hold of him, deserves, too, special notice. This was the newly revived interest in Shakspeare. The young men at Harvard were just then passionately given up to the study of the great dramatist; they contemplated with awe the ever various array of character and incident which the mighty master had evoked from silence into life; they worked the veins of profound philosophy, worldly wisdom, natural joy, to which he welcomed them in his exhaustless mines; they took note of his artistic skill in the general arrangement of his plays, examined critically the minuter beauties of his conceptions and style, committed favorite passages to memory, conversed about him, quoted him; and Channing's taste was so much moulded by the impression of his genius, that through life he was delighted by few intellectual treats so highly as by recitations from England's first poet.

The political questions of the day, however, were

the most quickening excitement to a spirit so philanthropic and hopeful, and through his whole college course Channing was a fervent politician. As has before been said, one of his most favorite studies was history, and among his manuscripts of this period is a long, minute, and carefully prepared essay on the English Revolution. In public and private, in friendly conversation, debating societies, themes, and college parts, he took every occasion to manifest his sympathy with the social agitations of the age. But the most definite evidence of his political zeal may be found in the two following incidents, the first of which is thus narrated by Judge Story : —

" There was one circumstance of a public and political character, which was felt with no small intensity among us near the close of our collegiate life. I allude to the political controversies between our national government and that of France, which then agitated the whole country, and ultimately led to that sort of *quasi* war and non-intercourse which the public history of the times has fully explained. The party then known by the name of Federalists possessed a very large portion of the wealth, the talents, and the influence of the country. President Adams was then at the head of the national administration ; a majority of Congress supported all his leading measures ; and in New England his popularity was almost unbounded, and sustained by a weight of opinion and of numbers which is without example in our country. The opposition to his administration here was comparatively small, although in the Southern States it was formidable. Party spirit ran exceedingly high, and, indeed, with almost irrepressible fury. Badges of loyalty to our own government and of hatred to France were everywhere worn in New England, and the cockade was a signal of patriotic devotion to ' Adams and liberty.'

"It was impossible that the academical walls could escape the common contagion. The students became exceedingly interested in the grave questions then before the country. They were nearly all united, heart and hand, in favor of the national administration, and warmly espoused the cause of their country. In our Senior year (1798), your father, who was among the most warm and decided in his political opinions, procured a meeting to be had of the students, with the sanction of the college government, for the purpose of expressing their opinions on the then existing crisis of our public affairs. The meeting was held. He made a very eloquent and powerful speech, and was seconded with great zeal and earnestness by myself and others. The result was, that a committee was appointed to draw up an address to President Adams, of which your father was the chairman. The address, with the exception of a single passage afterwards added, was written by himself; it was reported to the students, and was by them accepted by acclamation. It was sent to President Adams, who made a written reply in a very commendatory style; and both the address and the answer were published in the newspapers of the day, and received general applause."

In the Boston Centinel of May 19, 1798, it is found thus reported: —

"HARVARD UNIVERSITY.

"The committee of the students of Harvard, mentioned in the last Centinel, offered the following address, which was immediately signed by one hundred and seventy students. *

* The college contained at that time about 173 students, according to the number of graduates in the Triennial Catalogue for 1798, 1799, 1800, and 1801.

"ADDRESS

"TO HIS EXCELLENCY JOHN ADAMS,

"PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES.

"SIR, — We flatter ourselves you will not be displeased at hearing that the walls of your native seminary are now inhabited by youth possessing sentiments congenial with your own. We do not pretend to great political sagacity; we wish only to convince mankind that we inherit the intrepid spirit of our ancestors, and disdain submission to the will of a rapacious, lawless, and imperious nation. Though removed from active life, we have watched with anxiety the interests of our country. We have seen a nation in Europe grasping at universal conquest, trampling on the laws of God and nations, systematizing rapine and plunder, destroying foreign governments by the strength of her arms or the pestilence of her embraces, and scattering principles which subvert social order, raise the storms of domestic faction, and perpetuate the horrors of revolution. We have seen this same nation violating our neutral rights, spurning our pacific proposals, her piratical citizens sweeping our ships from the seas, and venal presses under her control pouring out torrents of abuse on men who have grown gray in our service. We have seen her ministers in this country insulting our government by a daring, unprecedented, and contemptuous appeal to the people, and her agents at home offering conditions which slaves whose necks have grown to the yoke would reject with indignation. We have seen this, Sir, and our youthful blood has boiled within us. When, in opposition to such conduct, we contemplate the measures of our own government, we cannot but admire and venerate the unsullied integrity, the decisive prudence, and dignified firmness which have uniformly characterized your administration. Impressed with these sentiments, we now solemnly offer the unwasted ardor and unimpaired energies of our youth to the ser-

vice of our country. Our lives are our only property; and we were not the sons of those who sealed our liberties with their blood, if we would not defend with these lives that soil which now affords a peaceful grave to the mouldering bones of our forefathers."

The other incident referred to at once illustrates the state of feeling in those times, and gives proof that the unconquerable love of free thought and speech, which characterized Channing's manhood, was strong in youth.

At the graduation of his class, the highest honor, that is, the closing oration at commencement, was assigned to him. The subject was "The Present Age." But a condition was added, that all political discussion should be excluded. The reason for this restriction was, that the students of the previous year had given great offence to the Democratic party by the severity of their remarks. And as the college faculty were on the Federal side, candor seemed to demand that commencement-day should not be embittered by political jealousies. They therefore prohibited the introduction of party questions. The class, however, were highly incensed at what they thought an intolerable infringement of their rights; and one of them wrote to Channing in the following fiery strain: —

"I could join you, my friend, in offering an unfeigned tear to the manes of those joys which are for ever fled; but indignation has dried up the source from which that tear must flow. The government of college have completed the climax of their despotism. They have obtained an *arrêt*, which from its features I could swear is the offspring of the French Directory. Although they pretend to be firm friends to American liberty and independence, their embargo on politics, which has subjected you to so many inconveniences,

is strong proof to me that they are *Jacobins*, or at best *pretended patriots*, who have not courage to defend the rights of their country.

"William, should you be deprived of a degree for not performing at commencement, every friend of liberty must consider it as a glorious sacrifice on the altar of your country."

The "inconveniences" referred to arose from the fact, that Channing, so soon as he learned the restrictions, formally declined to receive his part. The president at first accepted his resignation, thinking it improbable that a young man would be willing to give up the honors of the day, and even to endanger his degree, for such a trifle. But after a fortnight, finding him resolute, the government sent for him, insisted upon his performing his part, and made such concessions, that his brother, in writing to him, said, — "I think you have gained a most complete triumph. The government have certainly treated you with a most flattering courtesy; how could you expect them to yield more?" His grandfather, uncles, mother, all joined, too, in urging him to rest contented with the concessions already made, declaring that "such advice would be approved in the very academy of honor; that even the pride of a knight-errant would not be wounded by the course; that he had struggled long enough for glory, and that yielding in this manner was rather a triumph than a defeat." Thus constrained by the entreaties of all who loved him, he finally agreed to comply with the terms which the government had granted to his firmness, and went to Newport to pass the vacation and write his oration. The explanations and assurances of the president permitted him to express himself freely; and though he softened and

shortened what otherwise he would have said, he did not sacrifice conscience or self-respect. Throughout, it was a bold and earnest discussion of the exciting topics suggested by the French Revolution. In delivering it, he spoke with much dignity and decision; and rising, toward the close, to an impassioned burst of feeling, he said, with great energy, and a look directed to the faculty which showed how earnestly he was inclined to protest against any restraint upon free speech, — "But that I am forbid, I could a tale unfold, which would harrow up your souls." As the circumstances thus referred to were generally known, this sally was received with unbounded applause; and when he left the stage, some time elapsed before the cheering ceased. "Many years," writes the distinguished classmate so often quoted, "have passed since then, but the impression left on my mind of the brilliancy, vividness, and eloquence of that oration is yet fresh."

With this characteristic act, at which, in later years, he was much amused for its excess of enthusiasm, Mr. Channing closed his college career in the summer of 1798.

Mr. Channing was now to select a profession. He had been a hard student, "not a mere seeker of a diploma," as his uncle Henry approvingly wrote, "but a real worker," and had gained universal respect for his rare powers and attainments; his memory had been stored by extensive reading, and his judgment enlarged by constant correspondence with his sound-headed and sound-hearted grandfather Ellery; he had joined cordially in social pleasures, though with strict regard to temperance, — it being remembered that Story and he

invariably declined the use of wine, even at convivial entertainments, — and he had won the love of his associates by generous sentiments, cheerfulness, and unassuming courtesy; though so young, he had already taken decided ground as the advocate of high principles in religion, morals, and politics; he was all alive to his responsibilities, especially to his family in their poor estate; and now in what way could he best employ his energies and gifts? He did not hesitate as to his true calling. In his Junior year, indeed, he had written to Allston, — "I have no inclination for either divinity, law, or physic"; and still later he had so seriously thought of becoming a physician, that his grandfather wrote to him at length in relation to the duties and opportunities of that profession, and sent to him lists of the medical books which he should read. Even at the time when he graduated, most of his classmates supposed that he would choose the law, as the occupation best fitted to give free field for the exercise of his powers of eloquence, and urged him to take that course; but to all such appeals to his ambition he answered, — "I think there is a wider sphere for usefulness and honor in the ministry." The path of duty marked out for him by higher wisdom was plain. "In my Senior year," he writes, "the prevalence of infidelity, imported from France, led me to inquire into the evidences of Christianity, and then *I found for what I was made.* My heart embraced its great objects with an interest which has been increasing to this hour." He was the same man then that he manifested himself to be in mature life. As his classmate, the Hon. Richard Sullivan, bears witness, "there was in him the same clear and quick apprehension of truth, and the tendency to look higher than

to human authority, the same warm interest in the good and beautiful, the same temperate earnestness and independence in maintaining opinions, the same perfect purity, simplicity, and orderly course of life. He seemed destined by Providence to influence largely the character of the times in which he lived."

He returned, immediately on leaving Cambridge, to his mother's house in Newport, there to arrange his future plans; and the following letters will show at once the temper of his college life, and the feelings with which he adopted his profession. The first is one written many years later to a young friend, whom he hoped his own experience might aid.

"At your age I was poor, dependent, hardly able to buy clothes, but the great idea of *improvement* had seized upon me. I wanted to make the most of myself. I was not satisfied with knowing things superficially or by halves, but tried to get some comprehensive views of what I studied. I had an *end*, and, for a boy, a high end in view. I did not think of fitting myself for this or that particular pursuit, but for any to which events might call me. I now see, that, had I had wiser direction, I might have done more; but I did something. The idea of carrying myself forward did a great deal for me. . . . . I never had an anxious thought about my lot in life. When I was poor, ill, and compelled to work with little strength, I left the future to itself. I was not buoyed up by any hopes of promotion. I wanted retirement, obscurity. My after distinction has indeed been forced on me. . . . . .

"You are in danger of reading too fast. In studying history, I sometimes made an abstract from recollection, sometimes thought over what I had read. . . . . Walk out in the pleasant, still autumnal days. Such days did a great deal for my mind and heart, when I was in Cambridge. . . . . .

"I want you to find immediate pleasure in the acquisition of knowledge, in the works of genius and art, in poetry, in beauty everywhere, and in vigorous action of the intellect. In youth it is not a good sign to inquire perpetually, What good will this or that study do? Our kind Creator then allures us to the useful, by joining an immediate satisfaction to studies or pursuits which refine or elevate us. . . . . .

"Suppose a boy to choose to be a blacksmith, and to prepare himself for his business by exercising his arm perpetually, to the neglect of his other limbs and muscles, would he become another Vulcan? Would he not do more for himself by invigorating his whole system, and getting general health? You can easily apply this to the mind. What you want is to give tone, freedom, life to all your faculties, to get a disposable strength of intellect, a power to use in whatever course you may pursue. A professional education, or one designed to fit you for a particular profession, would make but half a man of you. You are not to grow up merely for a particular occupation, but to perform all the duties of a man, to mix in society, to converse with intelligent men of all pursuits, to meet emergencies, to be prepared for new and unexpected situations. A general, liberal, generous education is what you need. Every study into which you throw your soul, in which you gain truth and exercise your faculties, is a preparation for your future course. I have found a good in every thing I have learned. By degrees your destiny will open before you. You will learn what you are good for, what you are made for. I can say nothing more definite, and this is definite enough and full of animation. Do your duty, and you cannot fail to fit yourself for an honorable work."

The next is from his classmate, Arthur Maynard Walter, who died too early for his rare genius to be fully known and prized. It illustrates in an agreeable way the warmth of Mr. Channing's college friendships.

"I have just taken your letter from the office with all the fervor of a brother. I paid for it twenty-five cents, and would have paid twenty-five guineas, had I had them. It is full of the enthusiasm that I always admired in you, and occasioned all those indescribable sensations which arise from seeing opened to us the heart of a friend. I cannot agree to the present moral system of things. If we are to form connections at fourteen which are to be broken at eighteen, — connections which involve the best feelings of the soul, and which may affect in a great measure the future happiness or future misery of our lives, — we had better be without feeling, and live in a state of solitude. I have enjoyed no nights equal to those, when you used to call at my window, and I blew out the candle, and we went over to Shaw's. What nights those were! And the days, too, you well know. Our classic ground, Channing, I dare say, is overrun with weeds and with grass. The careless passer-by never thinks that every inch of ground was consecrated to affection, and every rock on which we sat, and every rail on which we leaned, had a value such as vulgar souls can never know. This is a theme on which I could dwell long."

The closeness of the bond which united these young friends is thus also testified to by Mr. Channing: —

"*Newport, October*, 1798.

"My dear Shaw, — I can clearly discover from ——'s last letter, that you doubt the sincerity and continuance of my friendship. Have you lived four years with me, and do you know so little of me as to think that time or any new attachment can tear from me the memory of 'joys that are past'? They are entwined with the threads of my existence; and it is only by rending these asunder, that you can destroy the melancholy recollection of our mutual happiness. I still remember your social fire, — how we

collected round it, — shortened the long winter nights by nuts, cigars, and social converse, and strengthened the ties of our friendship. I was then supremely happy. I can still remember our walks by moonlight, — how we strolled over the common, or took the solitary road to the Judge's. We leaned on each other's arms for support; we grew warm in friendly argument; the jarrings which sometimes prevailed among us only sweetened the concord and harmony which succeeded. O William! the memory of those days will be ever fresh within me. It has drawn many tears down my cheek. I am sensible that my happy days have passed, and I can only weep for them. My walks now are solitary; no friendly voice to cheer me; no congenial soul to make a partner of my joy or sorrow. I am, indeed, in the midst of my family, with the best of mothers, brothers, and sisters. But, alas! I have no *friend*.

"There is a beach about a mile from the town. I never saw elsewhere such magnificence, grandeur, and sublimity, as the wild scenery of nature here presents. The towering and craggy rocks, the roar of the waves, the foam with which they dash on the shore, their irregular succession, and the boundless ocean before, all contribute to inspire one with awe and delight. Here I go once a day. Sometimes I compare my fortune to the billows before me. I extend my arms towards them, I run to meet them, and wish myself buried beneath their waters. Sometimes my whole soul ascends to the God of nature, and in such a temple I cannot but be devout. Thus I am either borne to heaven on 'rapture's wing of fire,' or else I am plunged into the depths of despair. How different from my situation at college! There I had friends to fly to, when the world looked gloomy, and forgot my miseries in the circle of my equals. Here I brood over melancholy.

"I am now on the point of changing my mode of life. New prospects have dawned upon me. A field has opened

for exertion. I mean to rouse all my energies, shake off this lassitude of soul, and lose my sorrows in business. God alone knows what success will attend me. I mean to do my *duty*, and I feel careless about the event. I love misfortunes, when they spring from a resolute adherence to virtuous conduct. I trust that my burdens will be no heavier than I can bear, and I shall be cheered when I think that the struggles which I make are the struggles of honest industry.

"I suppose you know the profession which I mean to follow. Yes, Shaw, I shall be a minister, a shepherd of the flock of Jesus, a reformer of a vicious, and an instructor of an ignorant world. I look forward to a better country, and, while I am journeying toward it myself, I wish to lead others the same way. I know that you revere religion; and I wish that in your political career you would sometimes look beyond the strife, crimes, and intrigues of nations, to the harmony and blessedness of the Christian society in another state. We shall take different courses in life; but we shall meet in the grave. We shall bow before the same tribunal, and, I trust, shall rejoice for ever in the same heaven, and join in the same celebration of Almighty love. You will think I have grown quite ministerial, but, believe me, I cherished the same sentiments in college as I do now. In my view, religion is but another name for happiness, and I am most cheerful when I am most religious."

CHAPTER IV.

RICHMOND.

ÆT. 18–20. 1798–1800.

MR. CHANNING was now in his nineteenth year; and feeling that his friends had done all for him that was in their power, and yet more, that the whole of his mother's small income was needed for the family, he determined to secure some means of maintenance while pursuing his professional studies. His state of mind he thus discloses to his uncle: — "I am happy to hear that you approve of the step I have taken. It has always been a favorite wish of my heart to support myself. Bitter is the bread of dependence. All I had a right to expect from my friends was an education. This I have obtained, and I trust that Heaven will smile on my exertions." He was most happy, therefore, to receive an invitation from David Meade Randolph, Esq., of Richmond, Virginia, who was then on a visit at Newport, and was struck with the young man's intelligence, refinement, and liberal spirit, to reside in his family, as tutor; and in October of 1798, he left Newport for the South.

How much his family mourned this necessary separation appears by the following extracts from a letter of his brother Francis, then residing as a lawyer at Newport. "William has gone, and most of my joys have gone with him. You know not the worth of this 'ami-

able and almost divine fellow,' as one of his classmates calls him. Where shall I find his equal? In vain do I search the whole round of my acquaintance. So pure a mind, united with so noble a spirit, and such exquisite feelings, I nowhere discern." To his mother, especially, his departure was a source of the deepest sorrow. And to this overflowing affection he thus touchingly alludes in the first letter after his arrival.

"*November*, 1798.

"My dear mother, — A favorable opportunity has just offered, by which I can write to all my friends without subjecting them to the expense of postage. I begin with you. To you I owe the highest obligations. The anxiety and tenderness which you discovered at my departure from Newport will never be forgotten. I wish that my friends were not so deeply interested in my welfare. It makes both them and me unhappy. Every misfortune I experience is aggravated by thinking on the pain which it will occasion them. I often wish that I had been thrown loose on the wide ocean of life, without one eye to watch with friendly care my various successes, or shed a tear over my follies and miseries. When I was dashing over the billows, on my passage, I felt no fear for myself; but I was distressed when I remembered that I had left a mother behind me who was trembling with anxiety lest her son might be buried in the merciless waves. I understand from Francis's letter that you had many high winds after I left you; and did not every gale come to me loaded with the sighs of a mother? I mention this because I wish you not to make yourself unhappy by your concern for me. I know that I am far from home, where nothing but your good wishes can reach me. I am far from your social fireside. I am neither a sharer in your joys, nor the object of your fond attentions. But still the same sun shines upon us, the same

providence is extended to both of us, and the same God who protects and blesses you will watch over me and mete me out a portion of happiness. Our distance from each other cannot remove either of us from our common Parent. It is this truth which consoles me in my absence from home, and I wish that it might banish from your bosom those corroding fears for my safety, which, added to the load of your domestic cares, must make life wearisome to you. I feel every day more and more attached to my new abode. I am treated with every attention which hospitality can bestow. My duties are neither numerous nor irksome, and I can find time enough for study. I am resolved to prosecute divinity. My highest hopes of happiness are beyond the grave, and I cannot do more good to mankind than by teaching them also to lay up treasures where neither moth nor rust can corrupt them. My dear mother, though I have so lately left you, I begin already to anticipate the moment when I shall see you again. Time has swifter wings than the eagle. Months and years will fly away,—and with what rapture shall I press you all to my bosom! Hope is the anchor of the soul. I lean upon it perpetually. I paint more blissful scenes in prospect than I have ever yet experienced; and should they prove as baseless as the fabric of a vision, I can still boast of the happiness which they give in anticipation. I dare not ask, but I should like to receive, a few lines from you.

"Your affectionate son."

In Mr. Randolph's family Mr. Channing resided as an honored guest, and found there a circle of warm friends. Mr. Randolph was at this time the Marshal of the United States for Virginia, and his house was frequented by the most eminent citizens of Richmond and of the State, first among whom to be mentioned with honor was the late Chief Justice Marshall, who

was then in the full vigor of his manhood, and commanded universal respect for his uprightness, wisdom, and dignity of presence. How much a young man of Mr. Channing's energy appreciated opportunities so rare, for enlarging his experience and acquaintance with mankind, can be readily understood. He visited freely in Richmond, availed himself of the hospitalities offered by the neighbouring gentry, and on various occasions passed periods of leisure at plantations, besides travelling with the Randolphs in the summer season. Virginia was at this time still in her prosperity, and scarcely beginning to reap the penalty which slavery has since brought, in blasted fields, deserted mansions, ruined estates, and scattered families; and Mr. Channing felt deeply the charm of the cordial and elegant courtesy which everywhere greeted him. With more enthusiasm certainly than discrimination, he wrote to his brother: —

"I believe I have before told you that the manners of the Virginians are more free than ours. There is one circumstance which particularly pleases me. The men do not forget the friendship and feelings of their youth. They call each other by their Christian names. They address each other and converse together with the same familiarity and frankness which they used to do when they were boys. How different from our Northern manners! There avarice and ceremony at the age of twenty graft the coldness and unfeelingness of age on the disinterested ardor of youth."

And again, to Mr. Shaw, he says, —

"I believe I have praised the Virginians before, in my letters, for their hospitality. I blush for my own people, when I compare the selfish prudence of a Yankee with the

generous confidence of a Virginian. Here I find great vices, but greater virtues than I left behind me. There is one single trait which attaches me to the people I live with more than all the virtues of New England. They *love money less* than we do. They are more disinterested. Their patriotism is not tied to their purse-strings. Could I only take from the Virginians their *sensuality* and their *slaves*, I should think them the greatest people in the world. As it is, Shaw, with a few great virtues, they have innumerable vices."

But pleasing social relations did not deaden his conscience, as in the case of others they have too often done, to the iniquity and miseries of slavery. He saw the institution, it is true, under its most lenient form ; for the Randolphs were as humane as it is possible to be in relations so intrinsically unjust, and sought to reconcile their slaves to their situation, and to gain their attachment, by gentleness and kind attentions. Indeed, to judge from passages in Mrs. Randolph's letters to Mr. Channing after his return from Virginia, she was, and perhaps her husband, also, disgusted with the whole system ; for she writes, in relation to the threatened insurrection in Richmond, " Such is our boasted land of freedom," — Mr. Randolph adding, " This is a small tornado of liberty." In a later letter she thus still more strongly expresses herself : " I feel a great desire to quit the land of slavery altogether." It is very probable, then, that in the family where he resided the evils of this lowest form of society were fully exposed and discussed.* " I heard it freely spoken of with abhorrence," he says. And wherever he went, language of similar hostility may well have reached him ; for

* Works, Vol. II., p. 231.

the words of Washington and of Jefferson were sounding in the ears of their fellow-citizens, and men had not then become insensible to the absurd and hypocritical position in which the United States were presented to the world, — as a nation professing freedom and practising oppression, asserting equality and enforcing castes, declaring itself in advance of the whole civilized world by a recognition of inalienable human rights, and yet perpetuating the worn-out usages of barbarism. Not then, either, had speculators discovered how to postpone the destructive effects of slave cultivation, by breeding children, like cattle, for the Southwest market, and replenishing exhausted coffers by the profits of the "vigintial crop." Virginia had already, to be sure, voted for the abolition of the foreign slave-trade, with the economical prospect of becoming the American Guinea-coast, and monopolizing the gains of merchandise in men. But the stimulants to this accursed traffic, offered by the acquisition of Louisiana and Florida, by the rapid growth of the cotton-trade, and the invention of the cotton-gin, were not then felt. And Mr. Channing probably received, therefore, from intelligent slaveholders confessions of their dissatisfaction with this system of concentrated inhumanity. He came, also, personally in contact with its workings, by sometimes assuming the duty of distributing the weekly rations, by visiting in the slave-huts, and conversing with the domestics in the household; and he was once left by Mr. and Mrs. Randolph, during a short absence, in entire charge of these beings made helpless by constraint and dependence. The result of this experience was, that he received an indelible impression of the wretchedness which such wrongs must everywhere and for ever bring alike

on slave and master. The following letter fully expresses the state of his feelings : —

" There is one object here which always depresses me. It is *slavery*. This alone would prevent me from ever settling in Virginia. Language cannot express my detestation of it. Master and slave ! Nature never made such a distinction, or established such a relation. Man, when forced to substitute the will of another for his own, ceases to be a moral agent ; his title to the name of man is extinguished, he becomes a mere machine in the hands of his oppressor. No empire is so valuable as the empire of one's self. No right is so inseparable from humanity, and so necessary to the improvement of our species, as the right of exerting the powers which nature has given us in the pursuit of any and of every good which we can obtain without doing injury to others. Should you desire it, I will give you some idea of the situation and character of the negroes in Virginia. It is a subject so degrading to humanity, that I cannot dwell on it with pleasure. I should be obliged to show you every vice, heightened by every meanness and added to every misery. The influence of slavery on the whites is almost as fatal as on the blacks themselves."

The strong Federal predilections which Mr. Channing brought with him from the North, and the earnest discussions which he found prevailing in Virginia, gave a deepened interest to his intercourse with leading men, and doubtless exerted an influence to call his powers into their fullest action. In Newport, and at college, he had been accustomed to hear only one side of the important questions, which then stirred the country, presented ; but now he found himself confronted with Democrats, and was forced to meet their arguments face to face. To a friend he writes : —

"I am very desirous to see the debates in Congress. I find this advantage from being in Virginia, that I must adopt no opinion on the measures of government without having grounds for it."

This was the period, it will be remembered, when the Federalists were still dreading the influence of French Jacobinism, and when the Democrats saw in their opponents the tools of English intrigue, when the black cockade and the tricolor were worn as badges by the respective parties, and when the most bitter suspicion and calumny everywhere prevailed. It was well for a high-spirited and honorable young man to be brought thus into close contact with persons of an opposite creed from that in which he had been reared. It disarmed his prejudices, enlarged his views of public affairs, substituted candor for bigotry, and taught him to consult reason more than his passions. Indeed, so far did he learn to be just in stating the arguments of his adversaries, that his brother writes to him reproachfully, as if he had become a traitor. But his liberality was only the first development of that many-sidedness and cautious judgment which were so characteristic of his manhood. He was still a devoted Federalist, as appears from the following letters to his friend Shaw, which are of value at once as an illustration of the temper of the times, and as a proof of his mental energy.

"My political opinions have varied a little since I saw you; but it would be unfair to charge them to the Jacobinic atmosphere of Virginia. I trust that I am guided by sober reflection. I view the world as a wide field of action, designed by its Framer to perfect the human character. Political institutions are valuable only as they improve and morally elevate human nature. Wealth and power are sub-

ordinate considerations, and are far from constituting the real greatness of a state. I blush for mankind, when I see *interest* the only tie which binds them to their country, when I see the social compact improved for no purpose but the accumulation of riches, and the prosperity of a nation decided by the successful avarice of its members. I wish to see *patriotism* exalted into a *moral principle*, not a branch of avarice. I wish to see governments established and administered with the view of enlightening the mind and dignifying the heart.

"I have premised these observations, that you may be prepared for some remarks in the following pages which might otherwise surprise you. You wish to know what I think of France. I think her cause desperate indeed. The republic has not many months to live. Enthusiasm and numbers have hitherto crowned her with success, but enthusiasm and numbers have failed her. 'Her soldiers no longer burn with the ardor of freemen, and their ranks are thinned by the sword.' Her citizens are discontented, her conquered provinces are rising in arms against her, and government finds no resources but in fleecing to the last farthing the miserable subjects whom former rapacity had reduced to poverty. The republic is split into parties, and her naval defeats have leagued all Europe against her. This I collect from newspapers. Now I cannot conceive how a government, founded on corruption, unsupported by the attachment of its subjects, unable to pay its armies, shaken by internal convulsions, surrounded by rebellious allies, and attacked, as France soon must be, by the united forces of Europe, can maintain its ground and withstand such formidable and consolidated opposition. If my information is correct, I cannot but think that the great nation is in a more critical situation than ever; and this idea has led me to suppose, in spite of the Secretary's report, that she was sincere in her pacific professions to Mr. Gerry.

"Do not misunderstand me, Shaw. I do not say that France has given up her views on this country; I do not say that she is less active in her intrigues. I know better. What I mean is this, — that France rested her hopes of success on the party she had formed in our own bosom, that she never calculated upon that spirit which burst forth on the publication of the despatches, that her critical situation rendered a war with us impolitic, and that it was of course her interest to heal the breach with us, and wait for a more favorable opportunity to accomplish her designs. Mr. Pickering tells us, that France wished to delude us by the semblance of a negotiation, and palsy our exertions. No doubt, she wished us to repose in the lap of confidence, till, having 'sharked up the fry of Europe,' she should have leisure to devour us also. But how, in fact, was this to be done? She had evidently been too sudden in claiming tribute from America; she saw, that, in spite of her opiates, the eagle's eye was vigilant, and 'the national pulse beat high for war'; she saw unexpected energies of patriotism bursting forth, and measures of defence adopted, notwithstanding her tampering with our envoy. She had no navy to force us to compliance; and thus situated, I ask you, what was she to do? Was it not her interest to quiet our jealousies by forming a treaty with us, and delay to another and more promising period her schemes of bondage? Was not this the way to enable her infernal agents to work more securely against us, and poison the public mind with more success? These arguments appear to me of considerable weight; and though Mr. Gerry seems to be no Solomon in his correspondence, I am disposed on this subject to subscribe to his opinion.

"From considering France, I am naturally led to make some observations on the defensive steps which have been taken, and which, it is said, will be taken, by our government. You may call me Jacobin, if you please, but I am

not for enlarging our *standing army.* I wish there was nothing of the kind. It is the engine which has beat down the walls of liberty in all ages; and though I anticipate no dangers from the present one, still it is a precedent which may be fatally abused.

"I am opposed to standing armies on account of their *moral effects.* The activity of war leaves the soldier little time to corrupt himself. But an army in time of peace is the hot-bed of vice. Common soldiers are mostly taken from the dregs of society. Every farthing of their pay is spent in drinking. Example hurries along the honest and virtuous. Idleness vitiates them. They communicate their crimes to the neighbourhood in which they are quartered; and I do not think that Mr. Giles was too severe, when he said, that, 'for five dollars' worth of whiskey, they would every man of them sacrifice their country, and sell its liberties.' A soldier *by profession* is too apt to forget that he is a *citizen.* Subject to the absolute command of his superior officer, he loses the dignity of a freeman, and looks with contempt on subordination to civil authority. I have no time to write further. I meant to have said something on the alliance with England, which Paine is talking about; but I must defer it. Write soon; correct me, if I am wrong. You will find that my political principles and ideas of government are branches of my moral system. You do not know what an enthusiast I have grown for *liberty.*" *

"I feel vexed almost to madness, when I see the powers of Europe sitting so quietly till the chains are riveted on them. I expected ere this to have seen every nation, from the Mediterranean to the Baltic, in arms against this scourge of society. But instead of that, the idle controversies of Rastadt are protracted, while Naples is given up to pillage,

* This letter was written a year subsequent to the one which follows, but is placed before it, as it best introduces his political sentiments.

and France is gaining the command of the Rhine. . . . . I think that the *great nation* has nothing to fear now but from the distressed state of her finances, and I suppose the plunder of Naples will fill her coffers for the present. The moment for action has been lost. Switzerland, Belgium, and Holland discovered the symptoms of rebellion; — then was the time to strike a blow.

. . . . . .

" War, in its mildest forms, is horrible. As waged by the Russians [alluding to Suwarrow], it is the heaviest curse which can fall to the lot of man. If rivers of blood have already been shed, we must now expect oceans. God of peace! how long wilt thou leave thy children a prey to all the horrors of war? We have read so long of battles, that they have become familiar to us. We hear of the slaughter of thousands and ten thousands with as little emotion as if we had been told that so many flies had been swept away in a storm. But is war on this account less calamitous? Do you remember the picture of *Horror* which Southey gives us in a note to one of his odes? I shuddered at it. I saw the milk frozen on the breast of the dead mother. I saw the babe hanging to her cold bosom. I am indeed sick of war; my prayer to God is, 'Thy kingdom come,' a kingdom which the Prince of Peace will govern.

. . . . . .

" What need for this hurry about a treaty with France? A few months may make our way plain before us. Will you say that a refusal to meet the offers of France will furnish the Jacobins with arms against the administration? Shaw, if this hellish Cerberus, Jacobinism, could be soothed by throwing it a sop of honey, I would willingly consent to it. But, believe me, you must show it the golden branch, too, before you can stop its barkings. While John Adams is president, they know that the 'loaves and fishes' of office will not fall to their lot. Hence they will growl; and hin-

der them, if you can. It is of little consequence whether the government is administered this way or that. Jacobins will find fault. Besides, if the president can really wish to silence them, he ought to have sent the envoys long ago. Whence this tedious delay? Should he send them now, the Jacobins will continue to rail at him for not sending them sooner. I have thus offered a few reflections on the much agitated subject of our envoy. Answer me soon, and show me my error, if I have embraced one.

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"If I mistake not, the present period is the most eventful and important which has offered itself to our view during the whole revolution of France. In Europe, the fate of nations is suspended in the balance; and America, though so remote from the scene of blood and confusion, is most deeply interested in the decision of the contest. The eyes of all parties are now fixed on the president. What can he do? The Federalists in all parts of the country seem opposed to a renewal of negotiation with France. The Jacobins are more clamorous than ever about his supineness in forming a solid peace with that government. . . . . I rely implicitly on the firmness and independence of the president. I consider him as elevated above the clamors of faction, and superior to the narrow views of party. He is placed in so peculiar a situation, that no measure he can adopt will be popular. The only object he can propose to himself is the good of his country, and, I doubt not, he will pursue it with undeviating perseverance. I have ever considered it, and shall consider it, the interest of America to be at peace with all nations. Let me ask you, then, what influence the proposed negotiation will have on maintaining the peace of our country. This is the most interesting light in which it can be viewed, and it is my sincere opinion that it will tend rather to embroil us with the rest of Europe than to establish a lasting peace with France. . . . . .

"What will the rest of Europe think of us for making a treaty with France, when all other civilized nations have dissolved their connections with her? Have they not openly expressed their resolution to overthrow that government with which we are going to treat? Think not, Shaw, that I wish to see our government overawed by foreign threats. I would hurl them back with indignation. I only ask, whether it would not be better to sit still for a while, until affairs in Europe have assumed a more settled form.

. . . . .

"Marshall stands at the head of the list, and I do but echo the multitude, when I tell you that he is one of the greatest men in the country. His 'Answer to a Freeholder' had a tendency to sink him in the estimation of the Northern people. But if you lived in Virginia, you would think just as he did. I blush when I think of the Alien and Sedition laws. They have only served to show the weakness of government. They were worse than useless. Marshall is a great character. He bids fair to be the first character in the Union.

. . . . .

"I wonder how —— could presume to touch the venerable laurels of Washington. Did not Washington distinguish himself before and after the time of Lord Howe's command? Did he not show the most consummate skill in improving the advantages which Lord Howe afforded him? Witness Princeton and Trenton. Let any man read Washington's own letters; and if he will afterwards say that Washington is not a first-rate general, I will yield the point.

"When I read ——'s justification of France in breaking the treaty, I began to think that he had taken a few lessons in the school of French philosophy. I think it worthy of the president of the Directory, and I dare say that, if he would communicate it to that honorable body, they would decree him a place with Condorcet and other '*philoso-*

phists' in the Pantheon. I wonder what —— will assert next. The rankest Jacobin could not have crowded more offensive matter into the few lines which constitute the extract from his letter.

"I rejoice with you, my friend, at the victory of Nelson. I hope the report is equally true respecting the defeat of Bonaparte's land forces. The Directory, in their last communication, have carried him safe to Cairo; should it be true that he has repelled all human opposition, I would invoke old Nilus from the ooze of his fertilizing streams, and beseech him to overflow with his swiftest torrents the land he has long enriched, and sweep this prince of robbers from the face of the earth. There is one question which has arisen in my mind since the late news from the Mediterranean, and I think it an important one. Ought not a just policy to be alarmed at the disproportionate greatness and power of the British navy? There is not at present a nation in Europe to dispute with her the empire of the seas. We are exulting at the superiority of the British by sea, as we did a few years ago at the superiority of the French by land. We have bitterly rued the latter. Let us avoid the same error with respect to the former. I wish France to fall, but I do not wish England to rise on her ruins. We should be careful, that, in destroying one scourge of the world, we do not give birth to another.

"I am happy to hear that the same odium is everywhere attached to the name of Jacobin. This is the case even in Democratic Virginia. A *Jacobin* is synonymous with a dishonest, immoral, factious, and disorganizing man. There are many doubts here respecting Mr. Marshall's election. I think that he will succeed. Mr. Marshall has been much censured at the Northward for his sentiments on the Alien and Sedition laws. I begin to believe that he is right. He says that they are not unconstitutional. But they have produced an amazing irritation in the public

mind. The opposition in Congress were gradually losing their influence with the people in this part of America. The conduct of France was too flagrant to be justified, and her warmest partisans were obliged to confess that the executive had pursued towards her a liberal and pacific policy. Public opinion was becoming rectified. But the Alien and Sedition laws gave new life to the enemies of government, and blew the dying spark into a flame. You no longer hear government charged with ingratitude to France. This the Jacobins take care to throw in the background. They bring forward the Alien and Sedition laws into the front of the scene; and so successful have they been in exciting alarms, that there are thousands who think their liberties endangered and the constitution violated. You would suppose, from their language, that they were all in chains, that they were bent down to the ground with the load of their oppressions, — that Congress, like the Democratic negro-drivers of Virginia, were standing over them with a lash in their hands, and scourging them till exhausted nature was spending her last breath in complaint. I have no doubt but a petition will be forwarded to Congress, by the legislature of this State, for a repeal of these odious Acts.

"And now, I would ask, what good effects have these laws produced? Is the imprisonment of Lyon, or the arrest of three or four printers, an object to be placed in competition with the union of our country? The Alien law never has been, and probably never will be, carried into execution. The Sedition law has had no effect where it is most wanted. A printer in this city published seditious matter the very day before the Circuit Court sat here, in hopes of a prosecution; and the friends of government passed it by, on account of the irritation it would produce, and because they knew that such a prosecution would recommend him to the legislature for printer to the State. I wish government to possess energy as much as any man; but I believe that it is weak-

ened, instead of being strengthened, by pretending to energy which it cannot support. Is not the tendency of this to bring it into contempt, to render its measures weak and ineffectual? Is it not, in fine, much better to say nothing about sedition, when we cannot, or dare not, repress it? I consider, my friend, that a crisis is rapidly approaching. The question must soon be decided, whether the Federal government shall stand or fall. I understand that one court in this State has already set aside the Stamp Act as unconstitutional, and proceeded to business without it. There is no doubt, but that the legislature, which meets in this town next Tuesday, will take some steps for the repeal of the Alien and Sedition laws; and a gentleman, who read some resolves in the Jacobin Gazette of yesterday, has just informed me that one county have expressed their determination of standing by the legislature, in whatever measures they may adopt upon this occasion.

"For my part, I care not how soon the contest is decided. Should the worst happen, should my native country be prostrated, by the arts and influence of demagogues, at the feet of France, I will curse and quit it. I never will breathe the same air with those who are tainted with the foul impurities of French principles. I never will dwell in the country where I was born free, when it is doomed to groan under a foreign yoke. With tears in my eyes, I will bid farewell to the roof which sheltered my infancy, and to the green graves of my fathers, and take up my abode in the foreign land from which I boast of my descent, and which my honest ancestors left in hopes of finding climes more favorable to liberty and to the rights of man."

Mr. Channing's interest in public affairs, knowledge of national policy, and observation of men were yet more enlarged, while his powers of eloquence received a stimulant, from attending the debates of the Virginia legisla-

ture, which held its sessions in the capitol at Richmond. He writes, — "I have listened to these speeches with a great deal of pleasure. The Virginians are the best orators I have ever heard."

But zeal in the political movements of the day, and social enjoyments, occupied only the intervals of time. His energies were mainly turned to the duties of his school and to private studies. He had under his charge twelve boys, to whose care most of the hours of the day were devoted. In after years, he thought himself at this time too strict a disciplinarian. But he may have found a display of decision more necessary from his youth and smallness of size, of which an amusing illustration is given in the following anecdote, related by himself. An old colored woman came into the school to complain of some of the boys who had damaged her garden, broken her fence, and torn up her flowers, making loud complaint, and wanting to see the master. When he presented himself, she surveyed him for a moment, and said, — "*You de massa ?* You little ting, you can't lick 'em ; dey put you out de window." He assured her, however, that the boys should be corrected, and that she should be satisfied for her loss, remarking, — "Poor mamma ! she knew of no way of discipline but the *lash.*"

Absorbed in the duty of teaching during the day, and living much apart from the family, Mr. Channing was prompted by his wish for quick advancement to pass most of the night in study. He usually remained at his desk till two or three o'clock in the morning, and often saw the day break before retiring to rest. He had also gained from the Stoics, and from his own pure standard of virtue, ascetic desires of curbing the animal nature,

and of hardening himself for difficult duties. For the end of overcoming effeminacy, he accustomed himself to sleep on the bare floor, and would spring up at any hour of waking to walk about in the cold. With the same view, he made experiments in diet, and was rigidly abstemious, while he neglected exercise from too close application. The result of these night-studies, and of his general ignorance of the natural laws, was, that an originally fine constitution was broken, and seeds of disease were planted in his system, which years of scrupulous regard to health could never root out.

To these sources of illness was added another, which, as it illustrates his characteristic disinterestedness, may deserve a passing notice. When he left home, his provident mother had given him a bill of credit on a house in Richmond, with the confident expectation that he would use it to refurnish his wardrobe. Money, however, he could not bring himself to take from his mother's large family, and never drew upon his friends. Depression of spirits and absorption of mind made him careless, also, of external appearances; and he preferred to expend his salary in purchasing books. The consequence was, that his clothing became much worn, and he exposed himself during the whole winter without an overcoat, except when sometimes he borrowed one to attend church. These necessities came *home* to him, when, upon Christmas-day, he found himself too meanly clad to join the gay party assembled at Mr. Randolph's, and, sitting alone in his study, thought of his own family circle, then gathered, far away, around his mother's table. He thus alludes, years afterwards, to his home-sickness: —

"I am not sorry that you have had a touch of this disease. I know it well. I remember how my throat seemed full, and food was tasteless, and the solitude which I fled to was utter loneliness. It is worse than sea-sickness, but it comes from the heart; it is a tribute to the friends you have left."

This slight experience of poverty, too, sank deep into his memory, and gave him through life most tender compassion for the needy.

His general state and habits he thus describes: —

"My dear fellow, — . . . . . Did you but know the exquisite happiness which the handwriting of a friend affords me, now that I am so far from home, without one companion of my youth to cheer my social, or share my gloomy, hours, I am sure you would snatch a few moments from sleep, or the round of amusements, to scribble me a letter.

"You seem anxious to know how I am situated. Very happily, I assure you; as happily as I could be at such a distance from Newport. I finish school before dinner, and all the rest of the day I spend as I choose. I am treated with every attention I can desire. I have a retired room for my study, a lonely plain to walk in, and you know, Shaw, that under these circumstances I cannot be miserable. I often look towards the North with a sigh, and think of the scenes I have left behind me. But I remember that cruel necessity has driven me from home, and wipe away the tear which the painful recollection had wrung from my eyes. Do not misunderstand me, Shaw. When I say *cruel necessity*, I do not mean *poverty*. No! It is a necessity which my feelings have imposed upon me, — a necessity arising from a change in my sentiments, and a peculiarity of character which I cannot explain to you. It is now that I experience the benefit of habits which I formed in early life. O Heaven! what a wretch should I be, how

wearisome would be existence, had I not learned to depend on myself for enjoyment! Society becomes more and more insipid. I am tired of the fashionable nonsense which dins my ear in every circle, and I am driven to my book and pen for relief and pleasure. With my book and pen in my hand, I am always happy. Nature or education has given this bent to my mind, and I esteem it as the richest blessing Heaven ever sent me. I am independent of the world. Above all things, cultivate this independence. You know it is my idol, and I know of no virtue more necessary to a politician."

The studies to which he was assiduously devoting himself were partly of a general character, as appears from the following letters to his friend Shaw, describing his literary pursuits.

"I have not yet received an answer to my last two letters. But I abhor ceremony; and when I have an hour's leisure and a full heart, I cannot enjoy myself better than in communicating my sentiments and feelings to a friend. I am now totally immersed in literature. I have settled a course of reading for three years, and I hope at the end of that time to have knowledge enough to enter on the world. I intend to pursue a course of modern history immediately. I have purchased a set of Russell, and shall take Belsham's George the Third for a continuation. I shall gain more particular knowledge of the distinguished reigns by the help of biographies. I have understood that Harte's Gustavus is a good work. What do you know of it? If it is worth reading, and not too voluminous, could you forward it to me? What do you think of Gillies's Frederick? I can procure it here, if you recommend it. I have already Voltaire's Louis the Fourteenth. Would you advise Sully's Memoirs in this course? I shall begin Russell at Henry the Seventh of England. I have read all of Hume but the

last volume. He does not throw light enough on the rest of Europe. Tell me what books must be added, and what retrenched. I wish I could get a good Roman and a good Grecian history. I know of none which is political enough, and which attends to the private life of those nations. Ferguson will carry me to the termination of the Roman Republic. But must I wade through Gibbon to get acquainted with the Empire? Rather than do this, I will wait till I begin a course of ecclesiastical history. What do you know of Mitford's Greece? I shall now read history very differently from what I used to do. I shall read it as a politician and a moralist. I shall found my opinions of government on what I see to be the effects of different systems, and not on idle speculation. I study harder than ever. I have just been reading Priestley's Lectures, and have derived considerable advantage from them. I admire, above all, Ferguson's Civil Society. You lost a treasure, Shaw, when you sold it to me. Do you know any thing of Ferguson's other political work? I forget the title of it. What merit has Robertson's North America? Is he, like the sun, more majestic in his setting?"

Of Robertson's Charles the Fifth, also, which he at this period read, he once remarked: —

"That history first gave me a right direction in historical matters. The introduction is superficial; but to me, in my ignorance, it was full of light, and taught the value of *broad views* of human affairs; it led me to look for the steady causes and tendencies at work among nations. On the whole, Robertson gives a pretty fair view of the Reformation, — that mighty event, — though, indeed, he was a Protestant, and no Protestant can be wholly impartial."

Speaking of ——'s poem, he says: —

"In ancient times, it was a common opinion, that Par-

nassus was hard to climb, and its top almost inaccessible. But in modern times, we seem to have made a beaten cart-way over it, and where is the man who cannot travel it without difficulty or danger? Helicon was once represented as a scanty stream, and happy was he who could get a draught of it. But now it has become so bold a river, that every plough-boy in the field of science can water his horses at it. Inspiration descends in the form of a thick fog, and the beclouded fancy which paints a monster, while it aims at sketching nature, is admired for the boldness and wildness of its thoughts. . . . . .

"His metaphors, generally speaking, are too far-fetched. He shows more of the scholar than the man, and none but a scholar can understand his productions. He pleases the refined taste of the critic, but cannot strike the master-springs of the human heart. . . . . His poetry is loaded with cumbrous epithets. He dazzles us with his splendor, but he does not warm us with the blaze of his genius. Like a glittering sword brandished in a sunbeam, he flashes light into your eyes, without communicating any of the heat of that luminary. I love an author who converges the rays of thought till they burn in a focus.

"The ancients heaped flowers on the dead, but gave a simple garland of oak to the living hero. I admire their taste. Let the servile imitator deck his lifeless page with a profusion of epithets. They keep the corpse out of sight. But genius can give the spark of life, the bloom of health, the lightning eye, the majesty of form, and the glow of thought, to her productions. What need, then, of ornament?" . . . . .

"I have lately read Mrs. Wolstonecraft's posthumous works. Her letters, toward the end of the first volume, are the best I ever read. They are superior to Sterne's. I consider that woman as the greatest of the age. Her 'Rights of Woman' is a masculine performance, and ought

to be studied by the sex. *Can* you call her a prostitute? She indeed formed a guilty connection. But even then she acted upon principle. . . . . .

"It seems that you cannot love Mrs. Wolstonecraft. I do not mean to fight with you about her. Her principles respecting marriage would prove fatal to society, if they were reduced to practice. These I cannot recommend. But on other subjects her sentiments are noble, generous, and sublime. She possessed a masculine mind, but in her letters you may discover a heart as soft and feeling as was ever placed in the breast of a woman. I only know her by her writings. . . . . .

"I have been reading Rousseau's Eloise. What a writer! Rousseau is the only French author I have ever read, who knows the way to the heart.

"I would also recommend to you a novel, Caleb Williams, by Godwin. Shaw, what a melancholy reflection is it that the writers I have now mentioned were all deists! Blest with the powers of intellect and fancy, they have not been able to discern the traces of a God in his Holy Scriptures, and have trodden under foot the only treasure which deserved pursuit. The pride of human nature has been the source of their error. They could not 'become as little children.' They could not bear the yoke of Christ, imbibe the meek and humble spirit of his religion, and rely upon his merits for pardon and acceptance with God."

But while earnestly occupied in political speculations, and in historical and literary pursuits, — thus already manifesting the varied mental activity which marked him in mature life, — other characteristic tendencies appeared. The poetic temperament that had led him to the beach in Newport, and to the willow walk in Cambridge, — thrilling his soul with the sense of beauty, with

yearnings to be free from imperfection, and visions of good too great for earth, — was working strongly in him now. On the banks of the James river, dotted with islets of most brilliant emerald, — under the shadows of deep groves, where century-old sycamores reared their tall, white trunks like cathedral columns, — among arbours formed by the gnarled grape-vines which twined their heavy folds over trees crushed down by their weight, where the bright, polished leaves of the holly glistened, and the gum and the maple spread out their various-tinted verdure, and the tulip-tree raised its pyramid of orange-green blossoms to the sun, — he passed hours and days of delightful wandering, lost in soft dreams and rapturous visions. In one letter he says : —

" I wish that you had been with me, Shaw ! Arm in arm, we would have strolled over the fields, and gazed with admiration on the surrounding scenery. A few traces of cultivation varied the prospect, and all besides was wild and luxuriant. Nature still triumphed, still reposed on her bed of leaves under the shade of the oak and pine. Our house was delightfully situated on the top of a little hill. Before us spread a valley clothed with corn and tobacco crops. Beyond it rose two mountains. The passing clouds rested on their summits, and one continued forest covered their sides, extending down to the plain below. . . . . .

" We would often rest under the vine or the peach-tree, fill our bosoms with clusters of wild grapes, wipe the down from the delicious fruit, and slake our thirst at the friendly rivulet which murmured by our feet. I assure you I have had a charming time. I love the country. As you have but little work to do, you hardly know what is the meaning of the word Holiday. View me, pent up in a school for eight months, and then let loose in the fields, free as the air I breathe, and emancipated from the frivolous punctilios

and galling forms of society. I snuff up the fresh breezes; I throw myself on the soft bed of grass which Nature has formed for her favorites; I feel every power within me renewed and invigorated. . . . . .

"You told me, some time ago, that you had broken off the habit of musing. I wish I could say the same. You cannot conceive how much of my time, especially at this season, is thrown away in pursuing the phantoms of a disordered imagination. Musing wears away my body and my mind. I walk without attending to the distance. Sometimes joy gives me wings, or else, absorbed in melancholy, I drag one foot heavily after the other for whole hours together. I try to read, but I only repeat words, without receiving an idea from them. Do give me a recipe for curing this disorder."

Later in life, too, in counselling a young friend, he thus alludes to his own early habits: —

"Do any thing innocent, rather than give yourself up to *reverie*. I can speak on this point from experience. At one period of my life, I was a dreamer, castle-builder. Visions of the distant and future took the place of present duty and activity. I spent hours in reverie. I suppose I was seduced in part by physical debility, but the body suffered as much as the mind. I found, too, that the imagination threatened to inflame the passions, and that, if I meant to be virtuous, I must dismiss my musings. The conflict was a hard one. I resolved, prayed, resisted, sought refuge in occupation, and at length triumphed. I beg you to avail yourself of my experience.

"It is true that every soul has its own warfare to go through, but still we may help one another. At your age, there is often a great and sudden development of the sensibilities. The imagination is stirred up by the hope of a vast and undefined good, by prospects of the uncertain and

boundless future, and plunges into reverie. The present is too narrow for us. We know not what we want. Sometimes a secret restlessness devours the young, a mysterious fever of the spirit. We must not wonder at this. Our nature has mighty energies, and they are given to us, if I may so say, in a rude state, that we may reduce them to harmony. The young mind, when roused to life and power, is at first very much a chaos. Some at this critical period abandon themselves to sensual excesses, in hope of seizing that intense good which they thirst for. Some give themselves up to secret musings, and seek in unreal worlds what the actual world cannot give. Happy the young man who at this moment seizes on some views, however faint, of the true and great end of his being; who is conscious, amidst his wild thoughts, that he has within himself a power of forming himself to something pure, noble, divine; who sympathizes with the generous, disinterested, heroic; who feels that he must establish an empire over himself, or be lost. The idea of perfection is of necessity revealed to us at first very imperfectly; but if we seize it with faith in the possibility of realizing it, of rising to something higher than we are, and if faith give birth to resolution, then our youth, with all its tumults and vehemence, is full of promise."

And, again: —

"Have you been searching into your own motives, affections, powers, secret processes? This may be most useful, if we study ourselves, not from self-idolatry, not under the notion that we deserve all our power of thought, but that we may learn our common mysterious nature, may learn something of all souls, may learn our end, and may raise our standard of judgment and action. But perhaps you have been employed with yourself in the sense of meditating anxiously and jealously on your defects, or of fashioning in reverie your own future lot. These are both bad

occupations. I wasted a good deal of my early life in reverie, and broke the habit only by painful self-conflict. I felt that my powers were running wild, and my religious principles were infinitely important to me in giving me the victory. The best escape from this habit is found in interesting occupation, of an earnest, absorbing nature, and an innocent, cheering society. I have suffered, too, from a painful sense of defects; but, on the whole, have been too wise to waste in idle lamentations of deficiencies the energy which should be used in removing them."

And, finally, his romantic enthusiasm is thus laid fully bare, in a confession to his friend Shaw: —

"My dear fellow, — I sit down to write you, to disburden a full heart and cheer a heavy hour. It is spring time, and a universal languor has seized on me. Not long ago, I was an eagle. I had built my nest among the stars, and I soared in regions of unclouded ether. But I fell from heaven, and the spirit which once animated me has fled. I have lost every energy of soul, and the only relic of your friend is a sickly imagination, a fevered sensibility. I cannot study. I walk and muse till I can walk no longer. I sit down with Goldsmith or Rogers in my hand, and shed tears — at what? At fictitious misery; at tales of imaginary woe.

"My whole life has been a struggle with my feelings. Last winter I thought myself victorious. But earth-born Antæus has risen stronger than ever. I repeat it, my whole life has been a struggle with my feelings. Ask those with whom I have lived, and they will tell you that I am a stoic. I almost thought so myself. But I only smothered a fire which will one day consume me. I sigh for tranquil happiness. I have long wished that my days might flow along like a gentle stream which fertilizes its banks and reflects in its clear surface the face of heaven. But I can *only wish*

it. I still continue sanguine, ardent, and inconstant. I can remember the days when I gloried in the moments of rapture, when I loved to shroud myself in the gloom of melancholy. You may remember them too. But I have grown wiser, as I have grown older. I now *wish* to do good in the world. 'I love a divine,' says the good Fénelon, 'who preaches to *save men's souls*, and not to *show himself*.' I perfectly agree with Fénelon; and to make such a divine as he loves, I must throw away those ridiculous ecstasies, and form myself to habits of piety and benevolence. One of the reasons why I dislike the rapture and depressions of spirit, which we used to encourage at college, is probably this, — I find none to share them with me.

"The other day, I handed to a lady a sonnet of Southey's, which had wrung tears from me. 'It is pretty,' said she, with a smile. 'Pretty!' echoed I, as I looked at her; 'Pretty!' I went home. As I grew composed, I could not help reflecting that the lady who had made this answer was universally esteemed for her benevolence. I knew that she was goodness itself. But still she wanted feeling. 'And what is feeling?' said I to myself. I blushed when I thought more on the subject. I found that the mind was just as passive in that state which I called 'feeling,' as when it received any impressions of sense. One consequence immediately struck me, that there was no *moral merit* in possessing feeling. Of course there can be no crime in wanting it. 'Well,' continued I, 'I have just been treating with contempt a woman of *active* benevolence, for not possessing what I must own it is no crime to want. Is this just?' I then went on to consider, whether there were not many persons who possessed this boasted feeling, but who were still deficient in *active* benevolence. A thousand instances occurred to me. I found myself among the number. 'It is true,' said I, 'that I sit in my study and shed tears over human misery. I weep over a novel. I weep

over a tale of human woe. But do I ever relieve the distressed? Have I ever lightened the load of affliction?' My cheeks reddened at the question; a cloud of error burst from my mind. I found that virtue did not consist in feeling, but in *acting from a sense of duty.*"

Mr. Channing's poetic temperament was chiefly manifested, however, in the lofty hopes which it inspired for a state of ideal virtue in individuals and humanity, for "a more ample greatness and exact goodness, the world being inferior to the soul." In answer to one of his fervent outpourings upon these themes, his friend Walter writes to him: — "I have read your letter over and over again, and should not deserve to live, were I not delighted with the beautiful enthusiasm and benevolent wishes breathed in every word. They are monuments of your goodness and benevolence to me more valuable than those of brass and marble. But, my dear Channing, is not your theory incompatible with the experience of ages?" And in reply to yet another letter, his brother Francis says: — "You know nothing of yourself. You talk of your apathy and stoicism, when you are the baby of your emotions, and dandled by them without any chance of being weaned. What shall I expect? Nothing, certainly, but what is amiable and humane; but virtue in distraction may be as idle and useless, though soaring and sublime, as a lunatic." Friends on all sides, indeed, evidently thought him the prey of fevered imagination, and to one of their appeals to be more calm and prudent he thus replies: —

"I will throw together a few observations on the subject, in as short a compass as possible, and without the least mixture of romance or enthusiasm. I do not mean to challenge you into the lists of argument. I do not fight for victory.

I only wish to convince you that I am not so wild in my views, or so erroneous in my sentiments, as your letter represents me.

"You begin with observing, that 'the will of Heaven to man is declared in the situation in which he is placed, and in the circumstances of his life'; and you afterwards say, that 'every one is a Howard who like him applies his penny or his pound.' I cannot assent to this in its full extent. You evidently go upon the supposition, that the circumstances of our lives are decided by Heaven. I believe they are decided by ourselves. Man is the artificer of his own fortune. By exertion he can enlarge the sphere of his usefulness. By activity he can 'multiply himself.' It is mind which gives him an ascendant in society. It is mind which extends his power and ability; and it depends on himself to call forth the energies of mind, to strengthen intellect, and form benevolence into a habit of the soul. The consequence which I deduce from these principles is this,—that Heaven has not, by placing me in particular circumstances, assigned me a determinate sphere of usefulness (which seems to be your opinion), but that it is in my power, and of course that it is my duty, to widen the circle, and 'throw my beams' still farther 'into the night of adversity.' This, Francis, is the leading idea which runs through my letter, and will you call it extravagance?

"It is not enough, that you do good in proportion to your power, when you have criminally neglected to enlarge this power. Will you call the idle man 'a Howard,' who indeed shares his loaf of bread with a brother beggar, but who, by industry, might have procured the means of making thousands happy? You understand me. I may have written a thousand extravagances to you which I have forgotten. But the great and striking principles which I advanced I have unfolded above, and they still appear to my sober reason as principles founded on immutable truth.

You tell me I am only a candle. Perhaps I am less, — a farthing rushlight, a glowworm on a humble shrub. You say I am discontented at not being the sun. No such thing! Discontent is no trait in my character. Give me but the consciousness that I have done all I could and ought to do, and you pluck out every thorn from my bosom. I wish I could return your compliment, and say you were a candle. I wish I could point to a man of my acquaintance and say so. Philosophers tell us that a candle fills with light a sphere of four miles' diameter. Send me the dimensions of your sphere. Mine is fifteen feet by ten. Is it not shameful! Ambition has waved her flaming torch over nations, and set the world in a blaze. Avarice has penetrated earth itself, and with a steadier and more stinted light illumined the sunless mine. But show me humanity, with even one lonely candle in her hand, throwing a few beams into the night 'of adversity,' bringing to light the hidden treasures of neglected intellect, &c., &c. I dare go no farther, lest you should begin to compliment me about enthusiasm."

The form which his ardent philanthropy assumed was the one which must always cheer the truly noble and heroic, and which then presented itself in such glowing hues to many minds in France, Germany, and England, — the vision of a *perfect society*. "Socrates and Plato," writes his brother, "were schoolmasters; Pythagoras went farther, and formed a society of virtuous disciples, — a society wonderful, because unparalleled. It was, however, confined to but a part of Italy. My brother advances with noble ardor to a vaster enterprise. The world is to be his Academy, and all mankind his pupils. To make all men happy, by making all virtuous, is his glorious project. I adore it, thou moral Archimedes! but where wilt thou stand to move the mental world? Whither has enthusiasm hurried you?" &c. So,

also, his friend Walter writes : — " Will you make yourself miserable, because you cannot reach the rainbow from the hill ? In heaven, Channing, you will find the scope you seek for progression in virtue ; but here the mind partakes of the clay which incloses it," &c.

His views may be best learned from the following letter : —

" I have of late, my friend, launched boldly into speculations on the possible condition of mankind in the progress of their improvement. I find *avarice* the great bar to all my schemes, and I do not hesitate to assert that the human race will never be happier than at present till the establishment of a community of property.

" I derive my sentiments from the *nature of man.* What is man ? for what was he born ? To vegetate, to draw nutrition from the earth, and then wither away forgotten and unknown ? O, no ! he bears a spark of divinity in his bosom, and it is Promethean fire which animates his clay. Look at the human mind. See it bursting forth, spreading itself through infinite space, by its power of receiving ideas from external objects concentrating immensity in a point, and by its powers of retrospect and anticipation concentrating eternity in a moment. Need I mention his faculty of moral discernment, or his creative imagination ? Now, Shaw, I would ask you, in what does the perfection of man consist ; which part of his nature requires most care ; from what source is his most rational and permanent happiness derived ? The answer you *must* make is, ' The *mind.*' In proportion as his mind is improved in science and virtue, in that degree is he happy.

" Now, my friend, let me ask you to look on the world and to show me the man who is engaged in this improvement. All is hurry, all is business. But why this tumult ? To pamper the senses and load the body with idle trap-

pings. Show me the man who ever toiled for wealth to relieve misery, and unrivet the chains of oppression. Show me the man who ever imported virtue from the Indies, or became a better Christian by increasing his hoard. Are not the mines of science forsaken for those of Potosí? Does not the pursuit of wealth damp our feelings, freeze up the tears of benevolence, check the flight of genius, and excite in our bosom distrust and suspicion towards our *brethren of the human race?* Does it not render mankind venal and mercenary? Yes; give me gold enough and I will buy up the souls of our whole species. I do not except myself. I love money. I have my price. And what is gold? Perishing earth and dust. What does it procure? Meat, drink, and clothing. Now, Shaw, since the body is so inferior to the mind, do you think that more attention should be paid to feeding and clothing it than is absolutely necessary? No. Is not this speculative opinion supported by fact? Do not nature and experience declare to us, that the more temperate we are, the healthier and happier we are? *The wants of the body, then, are few; and the labor of mankind is misapplied.* This conclusion is fairly drawn from the premises.

"But here you will cry out, 'All this is theoretic nonsense. Man is selfish. He will always strive to gratify his senses; and if gold will procure these gratifications, he will always pursue it.' Stop, my friend; I grant that man *is* selfish. But *ought* he to be so? Was man framed for himself, or for his fellow-men? On this point of morality I know we shall agree; and you will think as I do, that if we *can* substitute benevolence for selfishness, we shall add to the sum of human virtue and happiness. Again, ought man to provide most for his body or his mind? Here, too, we shall agree;—and no doubt you wish to see a love of science take the place of a love of money in the human breast. Now I think that these changes can be

effected in the sentiments and feelings of mankind. How? By *education*. Do you wonder, Shaw, that you see so many selfish and avaricious wretches on earth, when you behold every mother, as she holds her child on her knee, instilling the maxims of worldly prudence into his tender bosom? How is it that you and I, in the midst of this infection, still glow with benevolence to mankind, and derive such high joys from the cultivation of our minds? Is not this an earnest of what would happen universally, were the world to unite in instilling these noble principles into the rising generation? Judge from your own feelings, whether the principle of benevolence, sympathy, or humanity is not *so strongly impressed on the heart by God himself*, that, with proper care, it might become the principle of action. Judge from your own feelings, whether the love of science is not founded upon so natural a sentiment, — I mean curiosity, — that, with the same care, it would pervade every bosom. I declare to you that I believe these ideas to be incontrovertible. Do you not glow at the prospect? Behold the rising virtues attended by truth and wisdom, — peace with her olive-branch, compassion with her balm —— O my friend! I can go no farther. I feel a noble enthusiasm spreading through my frame; every nerve is strung, every muscle is laboring; my bosom pants with a great, half-conceived, and indescribable sentiment; I seem inspired with a surrounding deity.

"'But stop,' I hear you say, 'you are too impetuous. How will you lead mankind to educate their children in this way?' Ay, there is the rub; there lies the difficulty. It is only by implanting benevolence and love of science in the mind of the parent, and rooting out *his* avarice and selfishness, that we can hope to see the child educated as we wish. 'But how can this be effected? Do you mean to war with nature?' No; I am convinced that virtue and benevolence are *natural* to man. I believe

that selfishness and avarice have arisen from two ideas universally inculcated on the young and practised upon by the old,—(1.) that *every individual has a distinct interest to pursue from the interest of the community;* and (2.) that *the body requires more care than the mind.*

"I believe these ideas to be false; and I believe that you can never banish them, till you persuade mankind to cease to act upon them; that is, till you can persuade them (1.) to destroy all distinctions of property (which you are sensible must perpetuate this supposed distinction of interest), and to throw the produce of their labor into one common stock, instead of hoarding it up in their own garners; and (2.) to become really conscious of the powers and the dignity of their mind. You must convince mankind that they themselves, and all which they possess, are but *parts of a great whole;* that they are bound by God, their common Father, to *labor* for the good of this great whole; that their wants are but few, and can easily be supplied; that *mind*, *mind* requires all their care; and that the dignity of their nature and the happiness of others require them to improve this mind in science and virtue. Believe me, my friend, you can never root out selfishness and avarice, till you destroy the idea that private interest is distinct from the public. You must lead every man to propose to himself, in all his actions, the good of the whole for his object. He must plough and till the earth, that all may eat of the produce of his labor. *Mine* and *thine* must be discarded from his vocabulary. He should call every thing *ours*. Here would be no robbery, for a man could steal nothing but his own. No man would be idle where such sentiments and such examples prevailed; and where there was no luxury to enervate him, every man would have leisure to cultivate the mind. We should sleep securely; we should live long and happily; and, perhaps, like old Enoch, when the time came, be translated to heaven.

"You will tell me that this is all chimera, that if we could indeed convert one generation, it would be very easy to perpetuate this order of things by education through those that followed; but how shall we convert this generation? Shaw! do you sit still and ask this question? Rise, rise! It is the voice of benevolence. Do you not feel new energies at the sound? Why despair of success? Are not you yourself ready to devote every moment of existence and every drop of your blood to the service of mankind? And are you and I the *only* virtuous ones upon earth? No! Thousands are ready to join hands with us. Truth is omnipotent. She must prevail. Are not benevolence and thirst for knowledge so natural to our race, that, by cherishing them in youth, when the mind is unwarped, we can form them into *principles of action?* Is there a man so hard of heart, that you cannot find in him some string to vibrate to the touch of humanity? Why despair, then? You profess to believe in the Christian religion. Does not Christianity favor such a scheme? I believe it will be hard to reconcile Christian humility, charity, and contempt of riches, with the present establishment of human affairs. Read Soame Jenyns. His arguments cannot be disproved.

"Rouse, then. Consider how you may best serve mankind. Lend this letter to Walter. 'We few, we happy few, we band of brothers,' will unite our exertions in the cause of virtue and science. We will beat down with the irresistible engines of truth those strong ramparts consolidated by time, within which avarice, ignorance, and selfishness have intrenched themselves. We will plant the standards of virtue and science on the ruins, and lay the foundation of a fair fabric of human happiness to endure as long as time, and to acquire new grace and lustre with the lapse of ages.

"My dear Shaw, I fear you will say I am crazy. No, no, —

> 'My pulse as yours doth temperately keep time,
> And makes as healthful music.'

Then you will tell me I am one of the Illuminati. Upon my honor, I never did receive any letter or letters from Weishaupt* in my life. These sentiments have arisen altogether from my detestation of avarice and selfishness.

"You will see, through the whole of this letter, an ardent desire to serve mankind. This is the reigning wish of my heart. Do try to think of some means in which we can unite our efforts for so desirable an end."

What particular plan had taken shape in his mind does not appear distinctly, though, from his papers, it is probable that he thought of joining himself, as minister, to a settlement of Scotch emigrants, whose fundamental principle was common property. Friends speak laughingly of his "great scheme"; and Walter proposes, in a vein of mock earnestness, to carry out the "imaginary republic of Coleridge and Southey, and a community of goods, in the back-woods, or, better far, in some South-sea island." He then goes on to expose what appear to him the peculiar dangers and temptations of "community," and ends thus: —

"Indeed, Channing, your sentiments are too extravagant. No doubt, man would be happier, if he were better. But the difficulty is to make him better. I do not know that this *can* be done. You say it is possible; but I can hardly believe. I fear that the German Weishaupt has been tampering with you. However, he never attacked your reason and judgment, but only warmed your imagination, by showing you, in distant perspective, beautiful scenes of men, and women, and children, sitting under oak-trees, eating acorns

* Professor at the Bavarian Institute of Ingoldstadt, and founder of the Order of the Illuminati, 1776.

and drinking water. I suppose in conformity with his wishes you are studying German in order to be able to comprehend the mysteries of the institution, which are so sublime that the English language sinks under their weight. Jacobinism is closely connected with their system, is it not? and this is the reason why you tell me high things of the Democratic Virginians?"

His grandfather Ellery, too, in his plain, straightforward fashion, opens his mind to his young relative thus: —

"Godwin's 'Political Justice' is after the manner of the French philosophers. I am not acquainted with his moral character; but I despise French philosophists. Their system goes to the destruction of all government and all morality. I wish the poorer sort of the Godwinites and Jacobinites would push home upon their rich leaders in the doctrines of perfectibility and equalization, the necessity of a community of goods, in order to a consistency of conduct with principle. This would make a division among them; for I believe I may confidently say, that there is not a rich man of those principles, who would share his property with the poor of the pretended fraternity. He might perhaps say, 'Be ye warmed, be ye clothed'; but he would not give a cent, unless for the purpose of elections, or to carry some other favorite point. The principles referred to are deistical; and while men are absorbed in luxury, and entertain such high notions of human nature in general, and of themselves in particular, they will not listen with attention to the self-denying doctrines of the Gospel, nor submit to that subordination which is essential to order and happiness, but will oppose themselves even to the government of Jehovah. To stand firm in the midst of such characters requires a great degree of religious fortitude; but I trust persecution is not necessary to preserve your integrity, or en-

kindle your zeal. The rock on which the true church of Christ is built is not to be overturned by violence or by undermining."

These most kindly meaning, but over-cautious, friends little knew the depth of that living well of humanity, which, first opening in young Channing's mind while reading Hutcheson in college, was thenceforth to pour abroad an exhaustless river. The current might be diverted, but nothing could seal the fountain. Their advice influenced his judgment, but it did not make him for an instant untrue to the law of his own character. The project present to his mind, whatever it may have been, was laid aside; but the large philanthropy which prompted it was only purified by the sacrifice. No fears suggested by other minds daunted his own indomitable trust. Then, and for ever,

"white-handed Hope,
The hovering angel girt with golden wings,"

cheered him and led him on.

It would be interesting, however, to know how far this experience, that enthusiasm impelled him to plans which those whom he reverenced and loved thought extravagant, was instrumental in developing the deliberateness which was so conspicuous a trait in maturer life. And some may question, whether he and the world gained more or lost by the vigilant purpose, then probably awakened, to avoid the least mistake. Were there not latent energies in him which never germinated, rich impulses which never bloomed and bore seeds for chance winds to scatter? Does not the Infinite Disposer balance the deficiencies of one class of characters by the excesses of another, and thus produce harmony by the counterpoise of contrasted energies? Can any

created being approximate nearer to the right than by never compromising and never postponing, but always obeying, the highest impulse? On the other hand, most of those who knew Dr. Channing well would probably say that his crowning grace was the calm patience with which he refrained from acting, until he was free to do so without a discord in any tone of feeling. He often declared, that, if there was any thing of worth in his life and influence, he owed it to the fidelity with which he had listened to every objection that was presented by the suggestion of his own or other minds to what he *wished* to believe or to do. He thought, too, that in younger days his impetuous nature had led him into error; and though he found it a hard trial to resist the fervency of his temperament, he was yet firmly resolved never "to be possessed," but, under all events, to "possess his soul in peace."

But while Mr. Channing's interests were thus broad, his feelings were constantly concentrating more and more upon religion, and a preparation for the ministry. And to his friend Shaw he thus writes: —

"I am studying divinity harder than ever. Thanks to God who made me, I have chosen the only profession which could make me happy. By studying the Scriptures themselves, I am trying to discover the will of God, and the uncorrupted doctrines which our Saviour taught. I am certain that I am impartial; and the honest mind is in little danger of going wrong.

"I once called myself a Christian. But till lately I knew not the meaning of the word. I entreat you, Shaw, not to absorb yourself so much in political pursuits, as to lose sight of the most important of all your concerns. The distinguishing duties of our holy religion are humility, purity

of heart, forgiveness of our worst enemies, forbearance under the heaviest injuries, detachment from the pleasures and pursuits of this world, and supreme affection to Deity. As charity is among the first of Christian virtues, Christianity necessarily requires of us an active life. It requires us to mingle with our fellow-men, and exert ourselves in promoting human happiness. By 'detachment from the world,' then, I do not mean monastic retirement. You cannot do too much good in the world.

. . . . .

"It is impossible for any one to be a Christian, unless he believes that the end of this life is to prepare for heaven, and bends his affections, his hopes, and his thoughts to this all-important end. Is your heart pure? 'Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God.' Are you humble? By which I mean, have you such a sense of your unworthiness in the sight of God, that you are willing to receive with an honest heart the truths which his Son taught, to give yourself up like a little child to be formed and guided by him, and to receive salvation, not as due to your own merits, but as a free and undeserved gift of God through Jesus Christ? 'Whosoever shall not humble himself as this little child, shall not enter the kingdom of God.' 'Resist not evil.' Here is a duty too sublime almost for our performance. We can hardly reach to so divine a height, as to imitate our Maker in doing good to the unjust, as well as just. Many Christians try to explain away this duty, and infidels laugh at it. But still it is in the Bible, and it ought strictly to be adhered to. What is the end of human existence? To prepare for heaven. How can we obtain heaven? By cultivating *love to God* and *love to man*. These are the great roots from which grow all the duties I have recommended. Now charity must govern us in all our conduct with mankind. Christ has expressly declared that this is a necessary qualification for one of his followers.

Let us suppose, then, that we are injured. Suppose, that, like our Master, we are spit upon. What does charity command us to do? Does she say to us, 'Retaliate,' or 'Forgive'? Is it not plainer than sunshine? But Christianity goes farther. She tells us we cannot meet with an injury worth the name. If one could rob us of heaven, he would indeed injure us. In no other part is a Christian vulnerable. Farewell. In haste, from a full heart.

"P. S. My intention was to have given you a delineation of the peculiar *doctrines* of our religion. But I had not room, and began with too little method. Should you desire it, I will hereafter give you my ideas in order on this subject. I assure you, I was struck with the sublime *precepts* of Christianity, when I began the study of the Bible. I was struck, too, with observing how far I had deviated from them. I found that I had not a pure, an humble, a pious, or a charitable heart. I saw how Christian charity differed from what I used to call benevolence. Every thing was new to me."

. . . . .

"You may see from my letters the warmth with which I have embraced the Christian cause. Would to God that I could resign every worldly prospect, and bend my whole soul to improvement in religion and the diffusion of the truths of the Gospel. O Shaw! it cuts me to the heart to see the contempt and irreverence with which the name and the worship of the 'Majesty of Heaven' are treated by the generality of mankind. Do we not offer a new cup of gall to our crucified Saviour? Are we not as inhuman as the Jews? Do we not plat, like them, a crown of thorns for the head of our Redeemer? They despised him, and we are ashamed to acknowledge him."

From his own accounts, he was at this period much engaged in a patient and, according to his means, a thor-

ough review of the evidences of Christianity, being stimulated no doubt by the open avowals of infidelity among the intelligent men of Virginia. This examination led him, after long struggles and painful perplexities, to an unfaltering faith in the providential mission and miraculous character of Jesus Christ. It was under the impulse of this deepened reverence for revelation, that he began the serious study of the Scriptures, even writing out for himself quite a voluminous commentary upon the New Testament, which he afterward destroyed. He sought, too, the advice of religious friends; and we find him thus describing his pursuits and spiritual condition, in a letter to the Rev. Joseph McKean, then lately settled at Milton, Massachusetts.

"Dear Sir, — I applied to our common friend and brother, Francis, a few weeks ago, to desire him to procure for me a religious correspondent. I told him that I could not find in Virginia one young man to whom I could express my sentiments on religious subjects, or to whose bosom I could confide those feelings which the study of the Scriptures inspired in my own. I told him that I wanted a friend to whom I could propose the difficulties which I found in the Bible, — a friend who had devoted his life to the service of his God, to whom I could open my whole heart, and talk with the familiarity of a brother. In a late letter, he tells me that you were pleased with the idea of such a correspondence.

"I began the study of divinity with attending to the evidences of Christianity. I examined them with caution, and I think without prejudice; and I am convinced that this religion is truly divine. I have now undertaken to acquaint myself with the doctrines of this religion; and to do this I have not applied to any commentators, or to any authors except the apostles themselves. My object is to discover the

truth. I wish to know what Christ taught, not what men have made him teach. I well knew, that, if I began with reading polemical divinity, there were ten chances to one that I should embrace the system of the first author which I studied, whether right or wrong. I was certain, that, as Christ came to save the world, every truth essential to salvation must be plainly unfolded in the Scriptures. I had also observed that many ministers, instead of guiding their flocks to the gates of heaven, had become so entangled in controversy as to neglect their most solemn charge, the saving of men's souls. These are the reasons which have induced me to apply to the Bible, — that only source of divine knowledge, — and to the Bible alone. The advantages I have derived from such a course seem to prove the propriety of it. I might have found the same truths in other authors, but they could never have made so forcible an impression on my mind. I have been active in acquiring, not passive in receiving, the great precepts and doctrines of Christianity, and the strength of my conviction is proportioned to the labor I have bestowed. My heart, too, has been affected, as well as my mind enlightened. I have learned to view every thing, as it were, through the medium of Scripture, to judge of actions by the standard of Scripture morality, and to estimate the importance of present wants by their influence on the happiness of another state. Such is the plan which I follow, and such are the effects which I ascribe to it. I would thank you for your opinion on the propriety of it."

He then goes on to state some critical difficulties which he says have struck him, and closes as follows : —

"They do not affect any of the great doctrines of Christianity. But, as they are parts of the Bible, I wish to understand them, and as they are apparent contradictions, they affect the credibility of the history."

Mr. Channing was at this time examining also the speculative doctrines of the various sects; and he apparently pursued this work with something of the blended freedom and caution of his later years, for we find that he was charged by correspondents both with over-orthodoxy and heresy. One friend writes to him: — "For my part, I must dispense with your sermon, as our *tenets*, I conjecture, do not coincide. You will look quite sober when I tell you that I am a 'Price-ite,' and believe, with him, an honest mind to be the one thing needful. I am quite a heretic, I know, on your system, but hope it is not criminal, as I am Christian enough to hold fast to every principle necessary to piety and to virtue." But from the opposite side a correspondent appeals to him thus: — "From an observation in one of your late letters expressive of a doubt of the vicarious character of Christ, I am induced to think you have not read Butler with that attention he deserves. I think he has proved, that if we are convinced by historical evidence of the truth of reve lation, we are not to doubt of its *doctrines* because wonderful or mysterious. The arguments on the proposition are worthy, perhaps, of another attentive perusal. I am not singular in allowing them to be irrefragable. As a friend to truth I shall with pleasure peruse your reply, and as candidly give to every objection its due weight. I must, however, request you not to unfold them in your letters, which are generally shown to ——, as they may give unreasonable and painful alarms. You know the prejudices of education, and that to the last generation one step from orthodoxy is a deviation into heresy." His liberality was probably quickened by the variety of opinions which he found prevailing round him, and by the catholic spirit that pervaded Richmond. But

although he found advantage in thus looking upon all sides of dogmatic questions, yet his inward struggles were greatly multiplied, and his mental loneliness became almost intolerable, as appears from the following extracts from letters.

"Would, Shaw, that you were here. I want a friend; but I can nowhere find one. My social feelings are as strong as ever. But I cannot often gratify them. I am sick of the unmeaning conversation of fashionable circles. By *society*, I mean the communion of souls. But where is this to be found? How I long to lean upon your arm, as I walk through the woods! But away with gloom. . . . . I cannot but thank you for your kind attentions, which from any one else would be burdensome to me. But knowing the goodness of your heart, and that you receive more happiness in conferring than I can in receiving your favors, I banish the painful idea from my mind that I am troublesome to you, and enjoy without alloy all the pleasures which your friendship provides for me.

. . . . .

"If you can indeed find leisure, write, I beg of you. I would empty my light purse (for light it is) every day of the week, if money could purchase such letters as I have to-night received. Do not construe any thing I have said into an indifference about hearing from you. I wish you could see the rapture beam in my dull eyes as I open your packages; you would want no other proof of my eagerness to correspond with you."

There was at that time but one church in Richmond, though services were held also in the Hall of Burgesses, where an Episcopalian and Presbyterian alternately officiated; and interest in religion generally was slight. Mr. Channing was driven to rely, therefore, very much

upon himself in determining his views, and finding nutriment for devoutness and love. His trials and struggles he thus makes known to his uncle : —

" Would to God that I could return a favorable answer to your question respecting religion! Christianity is here breathing its last. I cannot find a friend with whom I can even converse on religious subjects. I am obliged to confine my feelings to my own bosom. How often, when I have walked out into the country, have I looked for a companion to whom I could address the language of praise and adoration which was trembling on my lips, and which the surrounding scenes of nature had excited! But in vain. I fear that they read the volume of nature without once thinking of its Author. The Bible is wholly neglected. That treasure of wisdom and comfort is trodden under foot. The wonders of redeeming love excite no sentiments of gratitude. The glad tidings of a Saviour are heard without joy. Infidelity is very general among the higher classes; and they who do not reject Christianity can hardly be said to believe, as they never examine the foundations on which it rests. In fine, religion is in a deplorable state. Many of the people have wondered how I could embrace such an *unprofitable* profession as the ministry. Alas! they know not the riches which God has promised to those who serve him. You may fear, my uncle, lest I have fallen a prey to the contagion of example. Thanks to God! I have maintained my ground. The streams of dissipation have flowed by me, and I have not felt a wish to taste them.

"I will go farther, Sir. I believe that I never experienced that *change of heart* which is necessary to constitute a Christian, till within a few months past. The worldling would laugh at me; he would call conversion a farce. But the man who has felt the influences of the Holy Spirit can oppose fact and experience to empty declaration and con-

temptuous sneers. You remember the language of the blind man whom Jesus healed, — "This I know, that whereas I was blind, now I see." Such is the language which the real Christian may truly utter. Once, and not long ago, I was blind, blind to my own condition, blind to the goodness of God, and blind to the love of my Redeemer. Now I behold with shame and confusion the depravity and rottenness of my heart. Now I behold with love and admiration the long-suffering and infinite benevolence of Deity.

"All my sentiments and affections have lately changed. I once considered mere moral attainments as the only object I had to pursue. I have now solemnly given myself up to God. I consider supreme love to him as the first of all duties, and morality seems but a branch from the vigorous root of religion. I love mankind because they are the children of God. I practise temperance, and strive for purity of heart, that I may become a temple for his holy spirit to dwell in. I long, most earnestly long, to be such a minister as Fénelon describes. Religion is the only treasure worth pursuing. I consider the man who recommends it to society as more useful than the greatest statesman and patriot who adorns the page of history. What liberty so valuable as liberty of heart, — freedom from sin?"

In this letter, it will be observed, Mr. Channing says, "I have now solemnly given myself up to God"; and among his papers is found his act of self-consecration. One reads the time-stained writing with reverent tenderness, as he would take from a crypt a sacred relic; but it is of too personal a character to publish. It is chiefly remarkable for the sincerity with which its writer lays bare the morbid action of his soul, and for the care with which he seeks to guard against renewed failure in every possible emergency, and to map out clearly the path of

duty in all relations. This paper marks the transition-point in the development of his character. The day-dreams of boyhood, the hopes of youth, the longings and aspirations of eighteen years, like morning clouds, condense and fall in a refreshing rain of penitence. He has recognized in himself the want of unity, moral confusion and discordant tendencies, liability to sin and actual sinfulness, self-love, bondage to sense, to personal habits, to social customs; he has felt to the quick the need of a harmonizing principle of order, of serenity, fulness, freedom, force; he has become conscious of the sublime power of conforming action, thought, and temper to the inward oracle of right; above all, he has learned the mysterious law of spiritual life, that pure impulses must be renewed by trustful, humble, earnest seeking and waiting for the influence of the Divine spirit, and has experienced the awful fact, that

> "From God is all that soothes the life of man,
> His high endeavour, and his glad success,
> His strength to suffer, and his will to serve."

Henceforth there will be less impetuosity, more steadfastness, less bold enthusiasm, more forethought, vigilance, and patient hope. An on-looker may be inclined to mourn that conscientiousness so strictly rules an originally buoyant genius; but he will see, too, with what beautiful radiance, love, constantly brightening like a central sun, throws peace and joy upon balanced powers, moving in even orbits. The thought, also, will present itself, had this noble heart but reached maturity in an age when a faith serene as that of his later life was filling society around him like a genial atmosphere, then how would such an era of earnest piety have expanded every faculty, as the sunbeams open flowers! But these con-

fessions, shadowed as they are by the gloomy theology which at that period overspread all minds, still prove how sovereign was rectitude in this man's moral nature, and how comprehensive and minute was its sway. There was no trait, through the whole of after life, so characteristic as the unsleeping oversight of his conscience.

Particular phrases, and indeed the whole tone of the papers which thus open to us the secret chambers of the writer's spirit, show that the views which he then held of his own inward condition, and of his need of a renewed life, were such as are commonly called "serious." It will be seen that he even uses the almost technical expressions, "change of heart," and "conversion." In regard to these expressions, however, and others also in the preceding letter, it is but right to add, that he frequently asserted, without reservation, that he was *never* either a Trinitarian or a Calvinist; and once, at a later period of life, when asked by a most estimable Orthodox acquaintance, "whether he had not at some time experienced conversion," he answered, — "I should say not, unless the whole of my life may be called, as it truly has been, a *process* of conversion"; to which this quaint rejoinder was made, — "Then, friend Channing, you were born regenerate, for you certainly are now a child of God."

Of this important era in his life, Dr. Channing, as late as 1842, thus wrote to a friend: * —

"Your account of Richmond was very interesting. You little suspected how many remembrances your letter was to awaken in me. I spent a year and a half there, and per-

* Huguenots in America. By Mrs. George Lee. Appendix, p. 282.

haps the most eventful of my life. I lived alone, too poor to buy books, spending my days and nights in an outbuilding, with no one beneath my roof except during the hours of school-keeping. There I toiled as I have never done since, for gradually my constitution sunk under the unremitting exertion. With not a human being to whom I could communicate my deepest thoughts and feelings, and shrinking from common society, I passed through intellectual and moral conflicts, through excitements of heart and mind, so absorbing as often to banish sleep, and to destroy almost wholly the power of digestion. I was worn well-nigh to a skeleton. Yet I look back on those days and nights of loneliness and frequent gloom with thankfulness. If I ever struggled with my whole soul for purity, truth, and goodness, it was there. There, amidst sore trials, the great question, I trust, was settled within me, whether I would obey the higher or lower principles of my nature,—whether I would be the victim of passion, the world, or the free child and servant of God. It is an interesting recollection, that this great conflict was going on within me, and that my mind was then receiving its impulse towards the perfect, without a thought or suspicion of one person around me as to what I was experiencing. And is not this the case continually? The greatest work on earth is going on near us, perhaps under our roof, and we know it not. In a licentious, intemperate city, one spirit, at least, was preparing, in silence and loneliness, to toil, not wholly in vain, for truth and holiness."

He returned to Newport in July of the year 1800. The vessel in which he sailed was a sloop engaged in transporting coal. It was in a most wretched condition, being leaky and damp, and worse manned, for the captain and crew were drunken. They ran upon a shoal, and lay there till fortunately lifted off by the next tide. He

was very sick and much exposed. And his friends were shocked, on his arrival, to find the vigorous, healthy young man, who had left them eighteen months before, changed to a thin and pallid invalid. His days of health were gone, and henceforth he was to experience in the constantly depressed tone of a most delicate organization the severest trial of his life.

CHAPTER V.

STUDIES AND SETTLEMENT.

ÆT. 20–23. 1800–1803.

At Newport, in the bosom of his family, Mr. Channing now remained for a year and a half, devoted to the pursuit of his theological studies, and having under his charge the son of his Virginia friend, Mr. Randolph, and his own youngest brother, whom he was preparing for college. It was as deep delight to him to be at home, as it was to his mother, sisters, and brothers to have him with them. Francis had been compelled to return to Cambridge, where he was established as a lawyer. William thus became the head of the household ; and it was in this situation that his lovely domestic character began fully to display itself. The mantle of his father's sweetness fell upon him. When troubles and anxieties grew too strong for his mother to bear with equanimity, he would pass his arm around her, saying, "It will all be well, — it will all be well." He began, too, family devotions, and produced an impression of holiness and gentle dignity upon the minds of the younger members of the home circle which can never be effaced. It is said that he was conscious, however, of an inherited tendency to irritability and sternness, which sometimes displayed itself in words or deeds ; and that, sorrowing over such frailty, and feeling its unworthiness, he resolved that he would never become a minister till he had gained a con-

trol over all angry dispositions. The struggle led to a beautiful triumph; and no one, who saw the unbroken serenity of his mature manhood, could easily conceive that there had ever been an original excitability to overcome. His disinterestedness and anxious care for each and every one around him were unvarying. He undertook the superintendence of his three sisters' education, and induced one of them to give herself up very much to his guidance. "This year," writes this sister, "is impressed on my mind by his kind interest in me. He used to take me on his lap, and hold long conversations, which I sometimes thought too serious, though he would also play draughts with me for my amusement. He led me to walk with him, also, on the beach, when he would attract my attention to the glories of nature and of its Author." He was at this time, though not unsocial, yet disinclined to large companies, and fond of retirement. Such a course, he used to say, "made less work for repentance." His whole mode of life was extremely simple and abstemious, partly with the view of restoring his enfeebled health, but still more because he felt such habits to be favorable to the calmness and clearness of mind and the pure spirituality which he aspired to reach.

The following extracts from his early papers will best show the manner in which, at this period, he was endeavouring to discipline his spirit.

"I must not consider doing good as an accidental pleasure, but make it the business of life. Let me seek, not wait, for opportunities. Let the active spirit of Christian charity be ever watchful in discovering objects, and persevering in devising means of usefulness. Love is happiness; he who grows in love grows in happiness. God is

Love; and his image in us is love. If I would resemble him, let me strengthen love. I feel now that a degrading selfishness reigns in my heart."

"In doing good, let me aim at simplicity of means. There is no need of expressing my intention, of asking an idle question, of appearing to labor. Let a silent, persevering course of action lead me to my end."

"Poverty and sickness have the first claims for relief. Let me, in my solitary walks by night, search for wretchedness, and for my Lord's sake communicate the last of my store. Let me remember with Titus, that I have lost that day in which I have done no good to a fellow-man."

"But there are higher ways of doing good. I should show the influence of religion in my life and conversation. Religion is amiable, gentle, cheerful, serene; a friend to the social affections, the source of disinterestedness. Let me not represent it, then, as gloomy or hopeless. Levity, unmeaning gayety, however, throws the mind off its guard, and opens the door to every temptation. Strict self-command is absolutely necessary. The Christian, though cheerful, is vigilant."

"Let charity embrace in her broad arms all sects. Why should I brand any who differ from me with opprobrious epithets? Let me unite with all who love Jesus Christ in sincerity in propagating his religion."

"It will sometimes be necessary to change the tone of approbation and pity to that of denial. But let me act on such occasions deliberately, not from whim or dislike; and having formed my resolution, let me adhere to it with firmness. Let me offer my reasons in a short, perspicuous manner, or, if I wish to conceal them, give one positive answer and leave the subject, undisturbed by remonstrance, ridicule, or reproach. Mildness is not inconsistent with manly firmness. Benevolence will lose all its beauty, and much of its influence, if allowed to degenerate into indiscriminate, weak

indulgence. A world would be too small a recompense for one sacrifice of principle."

"When I feel irritable, let me be silent, let me quit society. I wish to be cool and collected amidst insult and provocation. I would avoid the diffuseness which characterizes anger, and vindicate my character, conduct, or opinions, in as few and temperate words as consists with the regard I owe to truth. All impatience to stop the person who speaks to me will serve but to irritate. Let me be calm, not using self-command as a means of triumph, but of mutual happiness."

The whole energy of his nature, indeed, was then devoted to a preparation for the responsible profession that he had chosen. His days were passed at the Redwood Library, where was freely accessible to his use a collection of books, extremely rare and valuable for the times; and at night the light in the little office near the house, which he used for a study, was seen burning long after darkness had settled over his neighbours' homes. But this period of his life has been most happily illustrated by himself.

"I must bless God for the place of my nativity; for as my mind unfolded, I became more and more alive to the beautiful scenery which now attracts strangers to our island. My first liberty was used in roaming over the neighbouring fields and shores; and amid this glorious nature that love of liberty sprang up, which has gained strength within me to this hour. I early received impressions of the great and the beautiful, which I believe have had no small influence in determining my modes of thought and habits of life. In this town I pursued for a time my studies of theology. I had no professor or teacher to guide me; but I had two noble places of study. One was yonder beautiful edifice, now so frequented and so

useful as a public library, then so deserted, that I spent day after day and sometimes week after week amidst its dusty volumes, without interruption from a single visiter. The other place was yonder beach, the roar of which has so often mingled with the worship of this place, my daily resort, dear to me in the sunshine, still more attractive in the storm. Seldom do I visit it now without thinking of the work which there, in the sight of that beauty, in the sound of those waves, was carried on in my soul. No spot on earth has helped to form me so much as that beach. There I lifted up my voice in praise amidst the tempest. There, softened by beauty, I poured out my thanksgiving and contrite confessions. There, in reverential sympathy with the mighty power around me, I became conscious of power within. There struggling thoughts and emotions broke forth, as if moved to utterance by nature's eloquence of the winds and waves. There began a happiness surpassing all worldly pleasures, all gifts of fortune, — the happiness of communing with the works of God. I believe that the worship, of which I have this day spoken, was aided in my own soul by the scenes in which my early life was passed." *

It was at this time, also, that he saw much of the Rev. Dr. Hopkins, and received deep impressions from the influence of his character and doctrines. The following spirited reminiscences, communicated in a letter to Professor Park of Andover, present a very pleasing sketch of that consistent seeker after truth and holiness, who, whatever his speculative errors, was at least thoroughly in earnest.

"It was not until I had left college that I became acquainted with him, and a short intercourse dispelled all the

* Works, Vol. IV., p. 336.

fear and reserve which my early impressions had left in my mind. His conversation was free, rather abrupt, blunt, and often facetious. We saw at once that he had lived in his study, and borrowed very little from the manners of the fashionable world. He took pleasure in talking with me of his past life, his controversies, &c., and I regret that I took no notes, and did not, by questions, acquaint myself with the progress of his mind. He told me, I think more than once, of his first intercourse with ——, who had received Calvinism in its old forms. —— resisted his doctrines relating to the disinterested character of faith and religion in general. At length his objections were overcome, and one day, bursting into tears, he told Dr. Hopkins that he was conscious that he had never experienced true religion. Dr. Hopkins also gave me some particulars of his controversy with Dr. ——, in which it was plain that he considered himself as the undoubted conqueror. I exceedingly regret that I did not learn more from him of President Edwards. My impression is, that President Edwards was a good deal indebted to Dr. Hopkins for his later views of religion, especially for those which we find in his essays on 'Virtue,' and on 'God's End in Creation.' I hope you will point out clearly the relation between these eminent men. Dr. Hopkins had not the profound genius of Edwards, but was he not a man of a freer and bolder mind?

"I was attached to Dr. Hopkins chiefly by his theory of disinterestedness. I had studied with great delight during my college life the philosophy of Hutcheson, and the Stoical morality, and these had prepared me for the noble, self-sacrificing doctrines of Dr. Hopkins. I have forgotten most of our conversations on this subject. I remember his once telling me that he did not consider the last part of 1 Cor. xiii. as referring to a future life; and I think that by the 'perfect' which was to 'come,' he understood the revelation of disinterested love under the gospel. One day, a relative

of mine, talking with him about the text Rom. ix. 3 ('I could wish myself accursed'), observed that the passage should be rendered 'I *did* wish.' Dr. Hopkins replied, that if Paul did not say what our version ascribes to him, he *ought* to have said it. The idea of entire self-surrender to the general good was the strongest in his mind. How far he founded his moral system on the 'general good' may be learned best from a tract he left on the subject, which Mrs. Hopkins put into my hands after his death.

"He was very true to his doctrine of disinterestedness, as far as money was concerned. His liberality abounded in his deep poverty. One day, my elder brother visited him to take leave of him, on going to establish himself in another town. Dr. Hopkins said to him, — 'I suppose you hope to get money. Very well. Get it justly, and spend it generously, and I don't care how much you get.' Dr. Patten told me that once at a meeting of ministers the case of a poor widow was laid before them, on which occasion Dr. Hopkins gave all he had, a quarter of a dollar. He was accustomed to say, that after that time he never knew want, and was able to commit himself without doubt to Providence. It was my habit, in the years 1800 and 1801, to attend a monthly meeting of prayer for the revival and spread of religion. Our number sometimes did not exceed twenty or thirty. Still, a collection was taken for missionary purposes, and, as most of us were very poor, our contributions did not greatly exceed the widow's mite. On one occasion, as I have heard from Dr. Patten, however, a hundred-dollar bill appeared in the box. Dr. Hopkins had received the same for the copyright of one of his books, and he made this offering at a time when he received next to no salary, and often, as I understood, depended for his dinner on the liberality of a parishioner.

"His views of the Divine agency and sovereignty were utterly irreconcilable with human freedom. He one day

said to me, that he did not see how a man could be more *active*, or (as I understood him) more a free agent, than in being *pleased with a thing;* and, in the last sermon I heard from him, he insisted that nothing was necessary to responsibility but that a man should do as he pleased. The origin of the pleasure or volition was of no importance.

"His preaching can only be understood by one who had heard him. His voice was most untunable. Some of the tones approached those of a cracked bell more nearly than any thing to which I can compare it. He changed from a low to a high key, and the reverse, with no apparent reason. His manner was without animation. His matter, as far as I can trust my memory, was not made acceptable by any adaptation to the taste of the hearer. He had exercised the severer faculties of his mind too much to give a fair chance to the imagination. He had no relish for poetry, and spoke of himself as finding no attraction in Milton or Shakspeare. If his style was clear and strong, he owed these qualities to his habits of thought, and not to any study of the best writers. We cannot wonder, then, that he was a very uninteresting preacher. He sometimes ascribed the unfruitfulness of his ministry to other causes, and seemed to see in it a judgment on himself. But a minister who has not the gift to win attention should see no mystery in his failing to do good. Dr. Hopkins was a student, not a preacher. His mind was habitually employed in investigation, and he never studied the art of communication. With an unharmonious voice, with no graces of manner or style, and with a disposition to bring forward abstract and unpalatable notions, is it wonderful that he did so little in the pulpit?

"His preaching had much *naïveté*, when he descended from his abstractions. He used to speak without circumlocution, and in a plain, conversational way. Once, in preaching at Dr. Patten's, he spoke of the 'loaves and fishes' as what men were still running after; and his simple, blunt

manner provoked a smile from some of his younger hearers. He saw it, and said, 'You may smile, but it is true.'

"He was an intense student. I have learned that he studied fourteen hours a day. He told me that once he allowed himself only four hours' sleep. His study was visible from my father's house, and I recollect, that, rising very early one winter morning, I saw the light of his candle streaming through the window. He took little exercise. His frame was very strong, or he must have sunk under his labors.

"He was facetious in conversation. I preached for him once; and after the service in the pulpit, he smiled on me, and said, 'The *hat* is not made yet.' On my asking an explanation, he told me that Dr. Bellamy used to speak of theology as a progressive science, and compare the different stages of it to the successive processes of *making a hat.* The beaver was to be born, then to be killed, and then the felt to be made, &c. Having thus explained the similitude, he added, 'The hat is not made, and I hope you will help to finish it.'

"His views of the times were dark. I one day told him that he must feel encouraged by the many revivals which were taking place. He replied, that these would only continue the existence of the church, but that great trials were to be expected before its triumphs. He gave a great deal of thought to prophecy, and was supposed to have a peculiar gift for its interpretation; how justly I cannot say.

"Like most of the ministers of the time, he was a strong Federalist, and was greatly grieved by the political heresy of his deacon, almost his only male church-member; whom, however, he did not spare, though in losing him he would have lost the only officer of the church.

"He was a man of perfect honesty, and he loved honesty in others. I remember his giving me an account of a council, at which he assisted, for ordination of a candidate who had received liberal opinions on religion. The young

man made no secret of his views, which were exceedingly offensive to several of the council. He answered the questions which were put to him with entire frankness; and I recollect the smile of complacency with which Dr. Hopkins spoke of his honesty, whilst dissenting from his opinions.

"Dr. Patten told me, what I did not observe, that he attached more and more importance to his opinions as he grew old, and that he bore opposition less patiently, though Dr. Patten, who was his disciple, thought him not at all excessive in this particular. I remember hearing of a severe rebuke he administered to a Methodist minister for his errors. One day, Dr. Hopkins met at the public library a singular man named Stuart or Stewart, sometimes called 'the walking philosopher,' in consequence of his having travelled over a good part of the world on foot. Stuart was a man of much kindness, too kind to lay his weight on a horse, or to eat animal food, or even to kill a musquito, when sucking his blood; but he was an atheist, and let drop some expression of his opinions before Dr. Hopkins. The Doctor was moved to indignation, and cried out, 'You fool! were it not for God, you could not move a step from where you stand.' Stuart replied calmly to Dr. Patten, who was present, 'The old gentleman seems disturbed.'

"Dr. Patten told me that Dr. Hopkins was doubtful as to the reality of his religion. He clung to the decrees, though, for aught he knew, he might himself be decreed to endless misery. I suspect, however, that his doubt was like that which men feel as to their living through the day. He was habitually cheerful, though I once saw him in what seemed to me deep dejection. I was with him the day after he was seized with his last sickness. A minister present prayed with him, and for the continuance of his life. When the prayer was finished, Dr. Hopkins said something to this effect: — 'You should not have asked for my life. I can do nothing more. It is time for me to go.' He could

not at that moment have been distressed by doubts. Perhaps these were the last words I heard from him.

"These are very unimportant reminiscences, but I felt bound to contribute what I could to his biography. The prominent light in which Dr. Hopkins is to be placed is that of a student seeking the glory of God and the spread of true religion, by purifying the common faith of its errors, and unfolding the Christian system in its harmony and true proportions. He had many qualities fitting him for a reformer, — great singleness of purpose, invincible patience of research, sagacity to detect and courage to expose errors, a thirst for consistency of views, and resolution to carry out his principles to their legitimate consequences. I consider him as having contributed largely to the more rational form in which Calvinism is held among us. I cannot judge in what proportions this credit is to be divided between him and President Edwards, and I shall be pleased to be enlightened on this point in your biography. I indeed shrink with a feeling approaching horror from some of his doctrines; but do not on that account withhold the reverence due to his character."

The generous and discriminating notice of Dr. Hopkins given by Dr. Channing, in his Sermon at the Dedication of the Unitarian Church in Newport,* should be read in connection with these reminiscences by all who would fully understand the relation between this venerable man and his young friend. He there says: — "I need not be ashamed to confess the deep impression which his system made on my youthful mind. I am grateful to this stern teacher for turning my thoughts and heart to the claims and majesty of impartial, universal benevolence."

* Works, Vol. IV., p. 341.

In December, 1801, Mr. Channing was elected to the office of Regent in Harvard University, a situation in every way most desirable, as it gave him support while pursuing his studies, — exacted only the slight duty of preserving order in the building where he resided, and of exercising a general superintendence over the young men, — brought him into the immediate neighbourhood of the valuable library of the college, — and, though separating him from his family, reunited him to his elder brother. He returned to Cambridge in the early part of the year 1802; and his appearance, manner, and character at this period are thus described by his college friend, Judge White.

"At that time, I remember, my impression was, that a greater change had passed over him during the few years of his absence, than I was prepared to expect. Instead of the firm, elastic step and animated manner which used to distinguish him, he appeared somewhat debilitated by ill health, and was more remarkable than formerly for gentleness, and a serious air and tone of conversation. I had thought of him as peculiarly qualified for eminence in the legal profession, and was struck with some surprise, on finding that he had no ambition for any such distinction. But I soon perceived how much more elevated was his ambition. His whole soul was engaged in the sacred studies to which he had devoted himself, and he at once showed that he had already become what St. Paul charged Timothy to be, — 'an example in word, in conversation, in charity, in spirit, in faith, in purity.' His wisdom, goodness, and sanctity, as well as his genius and intellectual powers, were strongly developed; and I began to feel in his company, what only increased upon me afterwards, a mingled affection and respect, approaching to awe, which the presence of no other man ever inspired in the same degree.

"In the spring vacation of that year, being myself connected with the University, I had the measles badly at my room in college, and I have always remembered him as a comforting angel in my forlorn condition. As expressed by me at the time, — 'I suffered nothing from want of attention, &c. William Channing watched with me, besides bringing me nice things as proofs of the ladies' remembrance. He has himself all the softness and delicacy of manner in attending to the sick which would become a woman.' This but feebly represents the impression which his tender and assiduous care made upon me, and which I could never forget. A China cup, in which he brought some of the 'nice things,' being left at my room, has been preserved as a precious memorial of his kindness, and is still among the first objects to greet my eye in the morning, and to awaken delightful associations connected with him, — associations which can hardly fail to have a salutary influence through the day. The agreeable and generous manner in which all his favors were conferred added to their intrinsic value a charm which made the remembrance of them peculiarly grateful. Such instances of kindness, however common they may have been, are worthy of notice, as illustrations of his character, and of the genuineness and extent of his benevolence. He always seemed actuated by the same sincere and elevated Christian love, manifesting it in his whole manner, and in all his social intercourse, extending the same cordial greeting to those who were entitled to it, whether he met them in solitude or in society, among the humble, or in the presence of high dignitaries. The imposing presence of official greatness, which might make some persons forgetful of humbler friends, never appeared to influence him in the slightest degree. His own great mind was above the ordinary effect of such circumstances, and it cost him no effort to be faithful to his convictions of the inherent dignity of man's nature, and to carry out his principles in all his conduct."

In relation to his theological studies, and the opportunities offered to him at Harvard, the same friend gives the following account: —

"When he was pursuing his professional studies at the University, we must remember that his advantages were very different from those now enjoyed there by the students in divinity. At that time the means of theological instruction were comparatively meagre; yet they were doubtless superior to what could be expected from the tuition of any clergyman unconnected with the University, and greater to Mr. Channing than to other resident graduates engaged in the like studies. President Willard, I well remember, in speaking of the Regent's office, told me that one of his views in recommending its establishment was to afford an eligible situation for some worthy student in divinity, who might be induced by it to pursue his studies at Cambridge. I have no doubt that Mr. Channing found it an eligible situation, and with his peculiar qualifications for self-direction, and his strong turn of mind for an independent course of study and inquiry, that he made greater proficiency than is now common, even with distinguished scholars, who enjoy the higher privileges afforded by the Theological Institution. President Willard and Professor Tappan, both of them able and learned divines, were constantly accessible for advice and assistance, in addition to the interesting public lectures of the latter, who was then also delivering his course upon the Jewish Antiquities."

Of Professor Tappan, the Rev. Dr. Pierce writes as follows: —

"You may know Mr. Channing's opinion of him by the fact, that he had him to preach his ordination sermon. He was considered a moderate Calvinist, which the Rev. John Dippon of Taunton used to say 'is a contradiction in terms.' Dr.

Tappan was as impartial a divine as I ever knew, extremely cautious not to prepossess the minds of his pupils, and always exhorting them to judge for themselves. It is well known that there was a strong mutual attachment between the professor and his distinguished pupil. Dr. Tappan was not only one of the most popular divines who entered our pulpits, but such men as George Cabot, Fisher Ames, Judge Lowell, did not hesitate to pronounce him one of the best preachers of the day."

Judge White thus continues : —

" The College library, with others to which Mr. Channing had access, afforded the books which he needed, and which no one better than himself knew how to use. He read them for knowledge and for truth, not to form or confirm opinions. No writers had authority with him in matters of faith beyond the force of their evidence and arguments. I still remember the freedom of his remarks and criticisms on works of high reputation, by the impression they gave me of his independence of mind in judging for himself. The celebrated Dr. Hopkins, of Newport, founder of the system of divinity which then bore his name, seemed to have more authority with him than any other divine, but I am satisfied it was rather owing to the influence of his virtues than to the weight of his opinions."

Mr. Channing's course of theological studies is not known. Obviously, however, it could not have been such as would now be considered at all thorough, for the new era in theology opened by the great students of Germany had scarcely dawned, — and with the few good books at his command he must have received but slight guidance in the " enchanted wood, where it is hard to distinguish truth from falsehood, and whose maze requires more than an Ariadne's clew," as Jortin well said of

ecclesiastical history.* But his general impressions of English theology, formed undoubtedly *in part* at that period, — though, as will be perceived, some of the works spoken of have been published since that time, — may be learned from the following letter, written long subsequently to a German friend. These brief criticisms, which are but a confirmation of thoughts already expressed by him in his Review of Fénelon, † will give the best, though confessedly a very imperfect, notion of his taste and judgment in theological literature. Plainly he found but little satisfaction in the writers to whom he had access.

"I fear you think I have forgotten my promise to send you a list of the best theological works in our language. But the task is more difficult than you imagine. Had you asked for a catalogue of the most prominent commentators and polemics, I could have furnished it at once. But you wanted, if I understood you, to know something of those writers who had given such enlarged views of Christianity as an enlightened and philosophic mind might read with interest and profit, and such writers are not very common.

"English theology seems to me, on the whole, of little worth. An established church is the grave of intellect. To impose a fixed, unchangeable creed is to raise prison-walls around the mind; and when the reception of this creed is made a condition of dignities and rich benefices, it produces moral as well as intellectual degradation, and palsies the conscience as much as it fetters thought. Once make antiquity a model for all future ages, and fasten on the mind a system too sacred for examination, and beyond which it must not stray, and in extinguishing its hope of progress

* Jortin's Remarks on Ecclesiastical History, Pref., p. vi.
† Works, Vol. I., pp. 167–174.

you take away its life. One almost wonders that the intellect has advanced as far and as fast as it has done, when one considers the war waged against it by civil and ecclesiastical power, and the heavy chain under which it has been compelled to move. I conceive that the tameness, frigidness, and dulness by which theological writings are so generally marked are to be attributed chiefly to the cause now stated. The intellect, paralyzed by authority and established creeds, has discovered less energy in treating that sublimest and most exciting of all subjects, *religion*, than in discussing the most ordinary interests of the present life. In England, the Established Church has been a dozing place to minds which anywhere else would have signalized themselves; and unhappily Dissent in that kingdom began in a bigoted attachment to Calvinism, which, by exciting the mind, did occasionally call forth much energy of thought, but which still, by infusing unjust and degrading views of God and of human nature, may be regarded as on the whole unfavorable to the progress of intellect. I think, therefore, that there is little in English theology to repay the attention or meet the wants of an enlightened mind. You will not often find broad views of Christianity, showing its harmony with human nature, and with the great laws of the universe, as far as we understand them, and its tendency to secure the true perfection of the individual and the race. You will seldom find that union of reason and enthusiasm, without which a system is essentially defective in correspondence to the human soul. Still, there are powerful thinkers in this department of literature, as in all others; and I will name to you a few books which I think will interest you.

"Butler's Analogy is one of the noblest productions of the mind, and deserves to stand at the head of the list; and his Sermons, although too abstruse for that species of composition, are among the finest ethical discussions. Lard-

ner's Credibility is a work of immense labor and research, distinguished by accuracy, candor, and sagacity, but too voluminous for a general reader. You will find an abstract of it in Paley's Evidences, the best view, I presume, in any language, of the proofs of our religion. Paley's Horæ Paulinæ is, perhaps, the most original work on the evidences of Christianity of our times, being strictly a discovery where nothing original was expected, and furnishing an argument which derives strength from the very circumstance of its long concealment. To these books on the proofs of Christianity may be added Campbell on Miracles, Douglas's Criterion, Watson's Answers to Gibbon and Paine, Priestley's Letters to a Philosophical Unbeliever, Priestley's Sermon on the Resurrection, and Robert Hall's Sermon on Infidelity. In this connection Farmer on Miracles deserves to be read, and his book on Demoniacs bears on the same subject. Campbell's translation of the Gospels, and especially the preliminary dissertations, are highly and justly valued. Wakefield's translation of the New Testament is in high repute. Law's Theory of Religion is the best view I know of the history and progress of religion. The second volume of Hartley's Observations on Man is on the whole an admirable work, disfigured, indeed, by a gross mechanical philosophy of the mind, but full of useful and exalting views of religion and duty. Locke's Reasonableness of Christianity is worthy of its author, being chiefly intended to show the essential objects of Christian faith, or what that faith is which, as far as opinion or speculation is concerned, constitutes a man a Christian, and to refute indirectly the common sectarian notions on this subject. We have produced in this country a metaphysician, Edwards, whose work on the Will has seldom, if ever, been surpassed in acuteness. He was the advocate of necessity. The doctrine of free-will has found a very able advocate in Dr. Samuel Clarke. Newcome's Observations on the Character of our Lord is not a

work of genius, but is one of the best summaries of Christ's teaching, and gives a minute analysis of his character. Lowth's Lectures on Hebrew Poetry, though written originally in Latin, belongs to English literature, and was thought worthy of a commentary by Michaelis.

"Under the head of Christian evidences, I forgot a work by our countryman, Mr. Verplanck, which I think has great merit. I find, on looking back, too, that I have omitted two other authors on this subject, who are worthy your attention, — Leland on the Necessity of Revelation, valuable for its learning, and Chalmers's Evidences, a book very deficient in comprehensive views of the subject, but singularly forcible in illustrating particular branches of it.

"The best sermons are those of Jeremy Taylor, Barrow, Sherlock, Horsley, Price, Robert Hall, and Buckminster of this country. In Sherlock you will find an able exposition of skepticism, as it manifested itself in his age.

"In practical theology the most striking work which I remember is Law's Serious Call to a Holy Life, — a book of ascetic character, and smelling of the cloister, but often forcible in its appeals, and original in its illustrations. Two books of a miscellaneous character deserve to be mentioned, — Price's Dissertations and John Foster's Essays; the former uniting with strong and just thinking a mild, serene, exalted piety, — and the latter, though perhaps repulsive to a foreigner by frequent involutions and obscurities of style, yet abounding in felicities and energies of expression, as well as in fresh and vigorous conception.

"I have said nothing of three authors of great name, — Hooker, the author of Ecclesiastical Polity, Cudworth, whose chief work is entitled The Intellectual System of the Universe, and Chillingworth, the champion of Protestantism against the Catholics. The truth is, — though I almost blush to acknowledge it, — I have not read them, and know them only by report.

"The Puritans, from whom we of New England are descended, boast of three writers who would do honor to any cause, — Howe, Owen, and Baxter; but their works, though furnishing proofs of great power and deep piety, are too disfigured by a technical theology to be read much except by professed theologians.

"Coleridge has just formed a book of extracts from Leighton's works, accompanied by notes from himself; and should the work ever appear, I doubt not that it will be very valuable; for Coleridge's genius is known to you, and Leighton was a rare union of learning, imagination, and a celestial spirit.

"I am sorry that I have not been able to speak more favorably of English theology; and I wish you to understand, that the opinion of the majority is against me, and that were I to publish what I have written, I should be charged with gross injustice. But I must write what I believe."

A friend, who was much with Mr. Channing at the period of his life which we are now considering, has the impression, that his time was more occupied in writing than in reading. And his remaining papers give every reason to believe that he had already formed his peculiar habit of following out a train of thought pen in hand. Writing was with him, as he often said, the one great means of making clear to himself his own thoughts. New suggestions were noted; contradictory views placed side by side; qualifications and exceptions carefully stated under the admitted principles to which they referred; broad, general views given of whole subjects; particular conclusions succinctly recorded; and thus gradually, from a main root, a whole series of truths branched out and divided itself into its large classifications and minuter bearings. He early acquired these

habits of methodical thinking; and all principles and facts grouped themselves into an order, which was the farthest possible from a mere mechanical arrangement, and which was ever unfolding under the organizing power of his spirit. This exactness of mind should be carefully heeded by all who would trace aright Mr. Channing's after progress as a theologian, and a religious and social reformer. For what might often have seemed to those little acquainted with the laws of his inward nature like timidity or slowness was actually but the working of his unappeasable desire to obtain such a view of any subject as should have coherent wholeness in itself, and be in unity with other views which he regarded as established. Already he was thus cautiously and patiently investigating the great problems, — as to the Divine Being and Character, — Human Nature, its destiny and duties, — Christ and Christianity, — Society and its various relations, — to the solution of which his after life was consecrated. Already he had reached the fountain-head of those rivers of thought, whose course he was to explore and trace to their mouths. And the truly important part of his theological education was this process of spiritual discipline, by which he was learning to concentrate his whole energy of will and thought upon sublime objects, until they inspired him with their grandeur, filled him with new desires for good, enlarged his powers of feeling and comprehension, fixed his reverent regard, and, through doubts and hopes, perplexities and mental conflicts, brought him up at length to the mount of vision, and to intercourse with God and the supernatural world. It was a process in which piety, conscientiousness, scientific thinking, imagination, humanity, and love of beauty were blended, to lift him into communion with

spiritual realities. A distinct intuition of these spiritual realities, and an abiding consciousness of the mysterious yet substantial, awful at once and loving ministries, by which man's existence upon earth is enveloped and pervaded, were the one result of his inward training which made him so influential as a religious teacher. He had attained to that living, transforming, renewing faith, whose principle is Divine love working in us, — whose fruit is love to man.

No authors probably aided him much in this travailing to give birth to great thoughts conceived by the spirit. But two of the writers mentioned in the foregoing letter were so often and so gratefully referred to by him, — besides Hutcheson, Ferguson, and Price, whose influence has already been described, — as to prove that they did something to determine at this period the current of his thoughts. The first, and by far the most useful to him, was Butler, whose Sermons on Human Nature he regarded as unsurpassed in English for clear, full, condensed thought, and to which may be traced, perhaps, the germs of some of his most important views. And the second was Law, whose mystic piety and earnest longing for spiritual perfection touched harmoniously many chords of his religious sympathy, although he felt that his temper was in other respects gloomy and narrow. He spoke with much regard, also, of Edwards, whose energy of intellect he greatly admired, while denying the soundness of his doctrine of necessity, and utterly rejecting its conclusions; many of whose writings he thought suggestive of deeply interesting views of the spiritual relations between the Divine Being and man, while he was horror-struck at the theology of others; and whose sketch of his conversion he once read in part

to a friend, with a voice trembling in its tenderness and eyes softened with emotion, as being one of the most pathetic and beautiful sketches ever given of the deeper workings of the soul.*

His habits as a student may be partially illustrated by the following extracts from his private manuscripts of that period. They show the earnestness with which he was seeking to control his intellect and to direct it to the highest objects.

"It is easy to read, but hard to think. Without thinking, we cannot make the sentiments of others our own. Thinking alone adopts them into our family. It is my misfortune, that I have read much, but have reflected little. Let me reverse this order. I prefer strength of impression to superficial knowledge, however extensive."

"We are very apt to think we have ideas, when we have only words. We mistake synonymes for definitions. I have often found rich ideas by analyzing words, particularly when they are metaphorical. Words should never be used in a loose sense. We are apt to be led astray by imperfect analogies, particularly in reasoning on the nature of Deity. It has been well observed, that, when beginning a subject, we should consider the degree of evidence to which we should yield our assent."

"In pursuit of truth, I should possess indefatigable patience and invincible perseverance. Have I not embraced errors to avoid the toil of inquiry? Let me read no enfeebling productions, but such poetry and works of fancy only as will tend to strengthen the purposes and elevate the feelings of my soul. I wish to acquire a calm energy, a strong principle of love and independence. Let me kindle a fire in my heart at the altars of religion, benevolence, and nature."

* Edwards's Works, Vol. I., p. 35.

"I often find my mind confused; a thousand indistinct ideas distract it. In such cases, it would be best to snap the chain of thought at once, to leave my books for a season, and to return back to the first step of the argument. In all my studies, I should pray for the Divine blessing. There are periods, when the mind is indisposed to serious study, when it sympathizes with a suffering body, when its tone is destroyed, and its powers require relaxation. But we should distinguish natural infirmity from that indolence which grows by indulgence, and which one vigorous exertion would drive away. It is desirable, and I think it possible, to acquire a conquest over the former weaknesses of nature. May we not form a habit of attention which pain itself cannot distract? Do I not too often apologize for indolence, by attributing it to bodily indisposition? Let me check that roving habit, which I have indulged, of reading a thousand trifles, — a habit by which the tone of the mind is destroyed, until we turn with loathing from wholesome studies. Regularity and order are essential; and when I have formed a plan, let me submit to many inconveniences rather than swerve from it."

"I have hitherto confused my mind by indiscriminate reading. I wish to obtain clearness of conception, a simple mode of considering objects. I should be careful at first in separating from a subject every thing foreign to it, and place it in as distinct a light as possible. After I have left my books for relaxation, I must ease my mind of a load of thought, and leave it to calm enjoyment."

"It is always best to think first for ourselves on any subject, and then to have recourse to others for the correction or improvement of our own sentiments. Thus we may reach truth, which we should never have observed, had we caught a particular mode of thinking from any author. No principles should be received from education and habit merely. Let me observe, before perusing the opinions of

observers. We check original thought by first learning how and what to think from others. The strength of others should be called in only to assist our weakness, not to prevent the exertion of our own powers. By means of this dependence on books, error, as well as truth, descends in hereditary succession. The sources of original thought are dried up, and the mind is overflowed by foreign streams derived through channels which other men have formed. Self-dependence in science is the road to useful truth. The quantity of knowledge thus gained may be less, but the quality will be superior. Truth received on authority, or acquired without labor, makes but a feeble impression."

"Whenever hypotheses are to be formed, let me first set down the facts on which they must be grounded, and weigh them carefully. It would be advisable to form a blank book merely for the insertion of those truths to which I assent; and it would be useful to revise whatever I have hitherto taken for granted, and judge it impartially. Let me beware, lest a love of originality lead me astray. Ambition is as fatal as prejudice. Love of truth is the only principle which should influence us; and those truths which will have influence on life are alone worthy of present attention. I was born for action. My object is to do good to the world by promoting the cause of religion, as well as to advance myself in religion. A life of constant action and unwearied exertion excludes universal knowledge. The improvement of the heart is infinitely more important than the enlargement of the understanding. I hope for immortality in heaven, not immortal fame on earth. I therefore wish to have a few important truths impressed deeply on my mind, rather than to be lost in that chaos of universal knowledge which has hitherto distracted me. Knowledge is only a means. Let me not make it the end. Abstruse speculations on useless subjects will but waste my time."

"As I find myself full of prejudices on the subject of government and politics, I will lay them aside for a year; and let me not even talk on them, except with intimate friends. History I will lay aside for the same time. Let me learn to be silent on subjects where I am ignorant."

"I must be very careful, lest, when my heart is warmed, I should be disposed to receive without examination the errors of enthusiasm for Christian truth. I fear that I am prejudiced in favor of some doctrines, and there is danger of my bending Scripture to my preconceived opinions. Let me always pray for impartiality, and strive to read without prejudice. I should also try to acquire a spirit of moderation from the Bible, instead of that narrowness of sentiment which is creeping upon me. Let me study Scripture without any ambitious views of striking out a new system, or of shining by ingenuity. Plain truth is worth far more than the splendid speculations of philosophical divines."

"Conversation on religious subjects will be highly improving, if I keep my heart open to conviction, if I strive to obtain truth, if I can listen with patience and without interrupting the speaker, and if I feel a desire to learn and not to shine. In these conversations I must not make a show of my religion, and of my religious feelings. I must make no noise about my experience; and, in fact, it would be best to omit the word 'I' in discourse."

"I am so much afraid of being led astray by human systems, that I wish to conform myself wholly to the Bible. Let me read it with the docility and simplicity of a child, sensible of my blindness, and praying for light. Let me be fearless of consequences in pursuing the truth, and strive to keep in view the connection which binds together the sacred writings. Let me read them, not with a view to speculate, but to learn the will of my Lord and Master. Let me contemplate his character, have his example ever before my eyes, learn of his life as well as of his words, and strive

to be assimilated to so perfect a model. Let me impress my mind with the importance of the Scriptures, with their superior value to human learning, and let me make a practical use of every part of them."

"I should endeavour to form my mode of preaching, as well as of thinking, on the Scriptures. Every sect has its *cant*, and there is danger of being blindly led by it. Let me strive to discover the errors of the party or sect to which I belong. Indiscriminate approbation is a sure step to error. Adherence to *principles*, and not to *men*, should separate me from all *parties*."

But already Mr. Channing's efforts were checked, and his spirits damped, by that state of half-health, which did so much during the whole of his early manhood to repress his native ardor and probably to overcast his firmament of thought, though it could never subdue his elastic will and truly heroic conscience. To his grandfather Ellery he thus describes his trials: —

"Perhaps it is fortunate for you that I have not written. A kind of stupefaction, of mental inactivity, has seized on me. A weight of dulness has oppressed all my faculties. My understanding and imagination have been buried under a cloud, my feelings deadened, and every spring of action relaxed. I feel but little interest in any thing, and yet I am not at ease. This insensibility is morbid, the effect of disease, an unnatural state of the mind, a violence on its powers and energies. I do not act or feel, yet my sluggishness is not voluntary. I am hemmed in, — I am fettered. Like Enceladus, I groan under the mountain. I labor to remove it; but still, still it weighs on my breast, and seems to press heavier after every struggle. In fact, my late complaint has had more to do with the mind than the body, or rather the body has been affected in such a manner as peculiarly to affect the mind."

Amidst this bodily and mental depression, making a path for himself between skepticism on the one side, and a gloomy theology on the other, slowly winning his way to peace and light, delicately conscientious, eager for unobscured views, aspiring with the intense enthusiasm of a highly ideal temperament after perfect good, he found the refreshment he so much needed in the society of his elder brother, whose sweet, tender, glad, and poetic spirit formed with his a beautiful accord. Their leisure hours were passed together in most unreserved intimacy; while sometimes they followed the paths which wound through the then unbroken woods of Mount Auburn, or overlooked the wide panorama from Prospect Hill, and sometimes wore away the night beside the embers on their student's hearth. Then, and ever after, they stood in mutual relations of transparent confidence, and were united by that devoted friendship which, next after communion with the Divine Spirit, and the love of a true marriage, is the holiest tie in life. Francis thus writes: — "A word of our dear William. You know not how happy I feel in such a brother. He is a bright light in the world; he illumines, he animates, he points the way."

Near the close of his theological studies, Mr. Channing was admitted as "a member in full communion of the First Church of Christ in Cambridge," which was at that time under the charge of the Rev. Dr. Abiel Holmes, who, in theology, was a "moderate Calvinist," and as a man was highly respected for unpretending piety and uprightness. The doctrinal opinions which he at this time entertained are embodied, though not very distinctly, in some articles of faith which he appears to have prepared for his own use. It would seem that his views

were such as would then have been called Arian, but strongly tinged with opinions derived from Dr. Hopkins. Where, however, language generally current at any era is used as in this paper, it is difficult to form a clear conception of the writer's real meaning; creeds serving to conceal minds, much as fashionable garments do forms, and both hiding distinctive features under uniformity of appearance. Yet there are particular expressions in these articles of faith, which are suggestive of the writer's later doctrines; and the whole paper is interesting, in enabling one to see the misty valley from which he made his toilsome ascent to serener heights. Do we of a later day sufficiently appreciate the painful struggles by which our spiritual fathers have led us up through shadow into sunshine?

At this time, as through life, Mr. Channing kept aloof from sectarian entanglements, for by instinct he dreaded, as much as from principle he disapproved, all fetters upon free thought. But it certainly is not strange that one, holding such opinions as he has recorded, should have been supposed to have a leaning towards Orthodoxy, as from the following communication it appears was the case: —

"He received the usual approbation to preach, I think," says Dr. Pierce, "from the Cambridge Association. As there was then no Divinity School, and he was peculiarly cautious about committing himself on points of difference among Christians; as he was also supposed to be in familiar correspondence with his grandfather Ellery, who had the reputation of Orthodoxy of the Hopkins stamp, suspicions were entertained by some that he himself would enlist on that side. So thought some of the ministers composing the Association before which he appeared for appro-

bation. For, as he himself told me, the only question proposed to him, after reading his sermon, was by Dr. Stearns of Lincoln, — 'Whether he believed that God was the author of sin?'"

Any doubts as to the actual state of his opinions, however, are put at rest by his own testimony, as given in later years. "There was a time," said he, "when I verged towards Calvinism, for ill health and depression gave me a dark view of things. But the doctrine of the Trinity held me back. When I was studying my profession, and religion was the subject of deepest personal concern with me, I followed Doddridge through his 'Rise and Progress' till he brought me to a prayer to Jesus Christ. There I stopped, and wrote to a friend that my spiritual guide was gone where I could not follow him. I was never in any sense a Trinitarian."

Judge White thus confirms this statement: —

"In a conversation which I had with him, on our way to visit Dr. Osgood of Medford, about the time he commenced preaching, he spoke of Dr. Hopkins with warm esteem, both as a friend and a theologian, dwelling with particular emphasis on the strong feature of benevolence which marked both his character and his divinity, and observing very pointedly, that 'those who were called Hopkinsians, and considered his followers, appeared to know little of him or of his true theological views.' With all his esteem for his friend Dr. Hopkins, he had no sympathy with these supposed followers, or with their leading opinions. His not manifesting an open and zealous concurrence with any particular sect or denomination, together with the deep seriousness of his religious impressions, might have given him something of an Orthodox reputation; but I am persuaded that he was neither more nor less entitled to it at that time than at any subsequent period of his life; for he was dis-

tinguished then, as ever afterwards, for his devotion to truth and for the spirit of free inquiry."

Mr. Channing began to preach in the autumn of 1802, being then in his twenty-third year.

"I find in my register for 1802," writes Judge White, "the following memorandum against October 24:—'Medford. Spent the Sunday and heard Brother Channing for the first time preach'; — and I have even now a distinct recollection of our interview with Dr. Osgood at his house, where we dined, and of the gratification I experienced at hearing him express the most decided approbation of the discourse, and speak of the young preacher's whole services and manner in the kindest terms of sympathy and commendation. Having been intimately acquainted with Dr. Osgood, and knowing how frankly he expressed his real opinion, I felt some solicitude till he had spoken, and was the more gratified by what he said. Yet he did not express himself so strongly as he did afterwards, in the absence of Mr. Channing. I know that he regarded him as a young preacher of extraordinary gifts, and of the highest promise in his profession. I mention this more particularly, having seen it erroneously stated in the Christian Register, I think by an anonymous writer, that his early performance was not thus promising. My expectations, which had been high, were fully realized when I first heard him. There was the same charm in his sentiments and tones of voice which I ever after experienced from his preaching. Indeed, to me he always appeared essentially the same, though always advancing; and the chief difference between his early and later preaching seemed to arise from his greater freedom, energy, and earnestness, both of spirit and manner, as he advanced in his profound views of religion and humanity."

His preaching at once attracted attention for its fervor, solemnity, and beauty. The power of his look

and tone, so expressive of a soul that overflowed with spiritual life, won the hearts of his hearers, and was felt as evidence that he spoke with the authority of experience. A person who heard his first sermon, on the text, "Silver and gold have I none, but such as I have give I thee," in which he described the large range of benevolent action open to every human being, however situated, describes his manner as singularly "radiant and full of heavenly joy." The general admiration felt for his spirit and genius is proved by the fact, that he was immediately asked to preach in Boston, Massachusetts, as a candidate for settlement, by the Society in Brattle street, and by the Society in Federal street. The Rev. Dr. Thacher, pastor of the Brattle street congregation, being quite infirm, was beginning to feel the need of a colleague; and the leading men among his people were exceedingly desirous that Mr. Channing should be elected to fill this office. They consulted with him freely in relation to the proposed arrangement, and gave him their assurance, that he would receive the invitation of the Society to become their associate pastor, if he would once more preach before them. He returned to Newport to rest and recruit, however, without giving them a definite answer.

Meanwhile, the Society in Federal street had been so strongly attracted towards Mr. Channing, that they hastened at once to request him to settle with them, and deputed Deacon Francis Wright to wait upon him with the following "call": —

"*Boston, December 29th*, 1802.

"Dear Sir, — When a committee of the religious Society in Federal street lately made application to you to preach

on probation, they were influenced not merely by their own united opinions, but by their persuasion of the dispositions and wishes of the Society which they represented.

"It is gratifying to find that in this persuasion they were not mistaken, but that the Society have received such satisfaction from your ministration among them, and have such a conviction of your character and accomplishments, that they were prepared for a more decisive expression of their approbation. At a full meeting of the Society, holden on the 28th instant, they voted to invite you to become their pastor, and have assigned to us the grateful office of presenting to you their invitation.

"Their votes, which we inclose, will inform you of the provision which they offer for your support.

"In determining on the compensation which it would be proper for them to propose, the Society have been governed by serious, and, they hope, liberal views of the charge which they request you to undertake. They are sensible what profound reflection and laborious inquiry the sacred office requires; and it is their wish and intention, that the mind devoted to such high engagements should, as far as may be practicable, be undisturbed by solicitudes and embarrassment from the cares of life.

"In this interesting transaction there has been great unanimity. Four only of the whole Society expressed any indecision on the subject. Two of those, from absence, had not had equal opportunity with the rest of the Society to form a satisfactory judgment. All the four so far concurred in the favorable sentiments entertained by the Society in general, that they wished to hear you further; with a laudable deference to the general sentiment, they excused themselves from giving a voice on the question, and signified their disposition to acquiesce in the decision of their brethren.

"We have thus the satisfaction to present you the desires of a united people, and cannot but express a hope that this

invitation and the proposals accompanying it will be acceptable to you. Such a result we shall consider as a blessing of Heaven on the Society and its members, and all with whom they are tenderly connected.

"Any explanations or further communications from us, which may be considered necessary, we shall cheerfully offer on request; for this purpose a personal interview would be agreeable to us, but the distance and the season of the year would render it inconvenient for the committee to repair to Newport. If it should be convenient to you, before your proposed return to this vicinity, to be at Providence or Bristol, some of the committee would have the pleasure of meeting you at either of those places at such time as you shall specify.

"In the name and behalf of the Society, we remain,

"Respectfully, with great regard,

"Your friends and obedient servants,

"Francis Wright,
Henry Hunter,
Thomas Davis,
John Davis,
Simon Elliot,
Russell Sturgis,
Edward Tuckerman, Jr.,
Committee.

"Mr. William E. Channing."

Together with this call, Mr. Channing received persuasive appeals from many friends, advising him to preach again, as requested, at Brattle street. But Dr. Thacher was now dead; and feeling that he was at once too ill and too inexperienced to discharge alone the duties in so large a Congregation, and that the difficulties incident to the settlement of a colleague with him

were great, he determined not to offer himself to that Society as a candidate. In his letter he says : —

"I hope that I have not subjected your Society to inconvenience by delaying to this period my answer to their application. A request of such importance required long deliberation. I have considered my decision as one which must seriously affect my whole future life. I have been unwilling, too, to determine without the counsel of my friends; and from a concurrence of opinion, I am constrained to decline the invitation of the Church and Congregation in Brattle street to preach before them with a view to settlement.

"I have been for some time in a feeble state of health, and the labor of speaking in your house is so great, that there would be danger of fatal injury. In so numerous a Society, also, professional engagements would require great exertions, the fatigues of which might unfit me for that attention to study on which my usefulness must very much depend. It is principally by impressing religious truth, that a minister is instrumental in promoting the happiness of his people; and his own personal discipline is indispensably necessary to a faithful and effectual ministration of the word of God. Hence the importance not only of health, but of much leisure, especially to one so young and inexperienced as myself. Could I, then, consistently with a regard to the prosperity of the church and the eternal interests of my hearers, desire a situation which would require efforts disproportioned to my strength, and where the multiplicity of duties would allow but little opportunity for improvement?

"Your Society, Sir, has much indeed to recommend it. But do not the very circumstances of your influence and numbers attach high responsibility to the office of your minister, and render experience, improved talents, and in-

sight of character peculiarly necessary? A man of principle should first of all inquire, whether he is capable of performing the duties he is called to undertake; and in calculating his powers, he ought to guard against too high an estimation of them, lest he be led to engage in a sphere to which he is inadequate. My feelings, as well as my reason, recommend for me a more humble sphere; and I have a confidence that you will be no sufferers in consequence of the resolution which I have adopted.

"In thus declining the invitation of the Church and Congregation in Brattle street, I am influenced by the highest respect for their character, and a sincere regard for their most important interests. And may God support and guide them by his grace and power!

"Under a grateful sense of the honor conferred on me by the Society which you represent, I remain, with great respect, "Your obedient servant,

"W. E. CHANNING."

This letter, otherwise unimportant, is inserted as illustrative of the caution with which its writer made up his judgment as to any course of conduct, though he was prompt and resolute in executing his purposes when formed. It shows, too, very clearly his humble estimate of his own abilities, and his conscientious desire to fit himself for efficient service in his vocation. Wisdom and moderation had already become his law.

Mr. Channing was the more inclined to settle at Federal street, because, while the weakness of that Society called out his sympathies, he was hopeful that his health would permit him to meet with fidelity the limited demand which would there be made upon him. So, returning to Boston, he conferred with the commit-

tee of the Society, and accepted their call in the following letter : —

"*To the Committee of the Religious Society in Federal Street.*

"GENTLEMEN, — I now address you to communicate my acceptance of the invitation of the Society in Federal street to settle with them as their minister. The character of the Society, the favorable disposition they have expressed towards me, and the prospect of usefulness in a situation so well adapted to my present state of health, render this call peculiarly agreeable.

"The proposals you have communicated are entirely satisfactory ; and when I consider them as expressive of regard to religion, and originating in a desire to relieve your minister from solicitudes and embarrassments, I accede to them with pleasure. A house was not mentioned, but I view the clause which provided for 'additional compensation in case of an increase of necessary expense,' as an engagement to supply one whenever it may be wanted.

"In settling among you, I shall consider the prosperity of the Society as my end and happiness. As an ambassador of Christ, I shall endeavour faithfully to declare those truths which he has revealed in his word, and on which the purity of the church and the eternal interests of mankind depend.

"Though young and feeble, I am encouraged to form this solemn connection from a confidence in that candor and affection I have already experienced. I desire your prayers to Almighty God, that he would enable me to perform the important duties of my calling, and that my labors may not be in vain in the Lord.

"With great respect,

"I remain your sincere friend and obedient servant,

"WILLIAM E. CHANNING.

"*Boston, February* 12, 1803."

His state of mind, at the time of his settlement, is shown by the following extracts from letters written at this period to his uncle, the Rev. Henry Channing: —

"I communicated, some time ago, to the Congregation in Federal street my acceptance of their offers. After much deliberation, I concluded that this situation was best adapted to my strength, and furnished the fairest prospect of usefulness. I requested two months' leisure to prepare myself for the office, in hopes that, in this period, I should be able to determine upon my state of health. The two months have passed. I find myself, on the whole, stronger. I have sufficient strength to perform the duties of the office at present. What may happen I know not. I think, however, when called by the unanimous voice of such a Society, I ought not to shrink from the labor because it is possible that my powers may fail. I have fairly laid before the leading gentlemen of the Society the doubts I have about my situation. I have told them that I fear, that, in the heat of summer, I shall not be able constantly to perform ministerial duty, and that I am willing to defer the ordination to any period, however remote. They, however, think, that the interests of the Society recommend an immediate settlement. They expect nothing beyond my ability, and are willing that I should call in help, whenever it is needed. Under these circumstances, I think it right to comply. The prosperity of the Church should be the great object of pursuit; and even if sacrifices should be necessary, I would willingly make them. But I am disposed to believe that my health will be promoted by this measure. I found that I grew strong by preaching before, and I think, that, with means of obtaining aid, I shall not be called to greater exertion than I am able to support.

"The Society have mentioned the third Wednesday in May, the 18th of the month, as most agreeable for the day

of ordination. I hope, Sir, you will be present and preach the sermon. Your fatherly goodness is a stronger motive than your near connection with me, for soliciting this favor. In this most solemn act I wish you to bear a part. You have had no little share in conducting me to the choice of the sacred profession. I ask, I need, your advice, direction, and encouragement. No one will feel half the interest you do in my welfare; no other person will bring so much affection to the performance of this part of the solemnity. I know the tenderness of your feelings. I anticipate the emotions which on such a day I shall myself experience. But I trust that religion will solemnize and compose the heart, and I think that from your lips I shall receive the deepest impression of the awful magnitude of my duty as a minister of Christ."

"I have spent the last week in the country, and I hope the fresh air and exercise have strengthened me. Yesterday I preached two sermons, of near fifty minutes' length each, and found myself but little exhausted. You may be surprised at my wearisome prolixity. But both the discourses were occasional; — one on opening our house of worship, after an interruption of divine service for nearly three months; the other, on the death of Mrs. Davis, a most amiable and much beloved woman, and an ornament of the Church. I might have said less, and perhaps to more effect. But I have not learnt as yet to repress the ardor of composition. I find it easier to dilate than to compress. . . . . .

"When I see the anxiety of my friends about me, I feel melancholy. Who am I, that others should take an interest in me? What are my powers? How little am I able to answer expectation! I almost sink under a sense of my weakness. But I am conscious that pride mingles much in this humiliation, and I find a refuge in the character of God, who has raised me up for his own purposes, and who

will make me in all situations an instrument for accomplishing his benevolent designs. . . . . .

"I feel awed in considering the magnitude of the duties soon to devolve upon me. The church of God, purchased with the blood of his Son; the eternal interests of mankind; — what objects are here presented! I ask your prayers, that I may have grace to be faithful."

On Wednesday, June 1st, 1803, Mr. Channing was ordained. The order of services was as follows: — Introductory prayer by the Rev. Dr. Holmes, of Cambridge; discourse by the Rev. Dr. Tappan, Professor at Harvard University; prayer of consecration by the Rev. Dr. Osgood, of Medford; charge by his uncle, the Rev. Henry Channing, of New London, who had declined preaching the sermon; right hand of fellowship by his classmate and friend, the Rev. Joseph Tuckerman, of Chelsea.

One who was a devoted parishioner and a warm personal friend in after years, George Ticknor, Esq., has communicated the following sketch of this occasion: —

"My first recollection of Dr. Channing is on the day of his ordination. My father, who was one of the council, led me by the hand, as a small boy; and I went with him in the procession, and sat with him. So far as I now remember, I had never heard of the person to be ordained; and I have still no recollection of any thing in the services of the day, till they were about to be concluded. Then the pale, spiritual-looking young man, whose consecration I had witnessed without really understanding its purport, rose and announced the closing hymn. My attention was immediately fastened on him; and particularly on his visible emotion, when he came to the last stanza: —

'My tongue repeats her vows,
Peace to this sacred house!
For here my friends and brethren dwell;
And since my glorious God
Makes thee his blest abode,
My soul shall ever love thee well.'

His looks, the tones of his trembling voice, and the devout air with which he repeated rather than read these lines, are still present to me whenever the scene comes up in my thoughts; and, in fact, at the time they so impressed the words themselves on my mind, that I have never forgotten them since. After the hymn had been sung, he rose once more, and in the same tender and devout manner pronounced a very simple benediction. In this, too, I see him still freshly before me, with his upcast eyes, and remember thinking how spiritual he was, and being sad that from his feeble appearance it did not seem as if he would live long."

During the spring and summer, before and after his ordination, Mr. Channing resided at Brookline, in the family of Stephen Higginson, Jr., whose heart, overflowing with benevolence and hospitality, had taken the interests of the young minister under his paternal care, and who, together with his devout and excellent wife, — who, though Orthodox in views, was liberal in spirit, — rejoiced in the saintly purity and rich intelligence of their friend. Here a large library and every convenience for study or relaxation were open to his use; his bodily health was benefited by country air and free exercise amidst the picturesque landscapes of that most beautiful neighbourhood; and his affections found a home.

MEMOIR.

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PART SECOND.

CHAPTER I.

EARLY MINISTRY.

ÆT. 23–34. 1803–1814.

It was in his twenty-fourth year that Mr. Channing entered upon his ministerial course in Boston, already fitted by the discipline of life and inward experience to sympathize in the movements of the time and place in which his lot was cast, and destined to lend them efficient aid. But before tracing his relations to that development of spirituality, liberty, love, which it was the mission of his age to promote, let us first observe his growth toward the stature of a perfect man in his closet and home circle, in his parish and immediate neighbourhood. Thus shall we follow down the stream from its mountain springs, which were fed by the rains of heaven.

The family of an estimable parishioner, with whom Mr. Channing at first boarded, remember him at that period as serious in deportment to a degree that was even oppressive. He had the air of one absorbed in his own contemplations, and looked care-worn, weary, and anxious. Society seemed distasteful; he joined but little in conversation; took his meals in haste; was retired in his ways; lived mostly in his study; appeared

rather annoyed than pleased with visiters; seldom went abroad, — declining, when possible, all invitations; and, in a word, was most content when left uninterruptedly to himself. There was sweetness in his looks and words, however; solemn counsels were gently given, and an atmosphere of holiness threw a winning charm over his conversation and conduct. Undoubtedly, this reserve, the shade of which was deepest in his first entrance upon his duties, and which cleared away as he became more confirmed in goodness and wisdom, was partly owing to his habit of fastening attention upon any subject that interested him, and of brooding over it even while in society and in action, — a fault in his regard, of which he early became aware, and which he endeavoured through his later life to check. In his journals he frequently thus refers to it: —

"A subject has been very injurious to me. It has shut me up in my room till my body has been exhausted, and has led to neglect of my people and family. I must be moderate in every thing."

"It will often be useful to fix the number of hours during which I will attend to a subject, and rigidly to adhere to the determination."

"My mode of study destroys me, my health, my piety, my social feelings; and is therefore sinful."

"My long absorption in a subject enfeebles my mind, prevents its free action, casts a cloud over my thoughts, produces a painful anxiety."

"My speculations about the origin of moral feelings, &c., cannot justify a practical neglect of them."

"No subject can be usefully continued beyond a certain time. The mind needs to be recruited. All the motives which impel me to pursue the subject require me to disengage my mind for a season."

"The attainment of truth requires me to be able to continue in a state of doubt until I have had time to examine all the arguments which relate to a point; and this examination, however protracted, if conducted by a love of truth, is virtuous, — approved by conscience and God, — the improvement of my best powers, — an approximation towards God."

"The wretchedness I have suffered on so many topics shows the importance of limiting the period of attention."

"Because doubt spreads itself over one subject I ought not to doubt of all. This will lead to misery. A narrow mind cannot see the connections between many propositions which are yet supported by sufficient proofs."

"My sleep has been broken by anxiety at not discovering truth."

"Let it be my rule never to carry a subject with me into society. My social duties are in this way neglected."

But his serious manner was chiefly to be traced to profound conscientiousness. Without the elastic spirits which a vigorous tone of body gives, as a power of reaction for the spirit, he bent beneath a feeling of unfitness for the duties of his vocation. To a young friend who was just entering upon the ministry, and who was oppressed by a like sense of responsibility, he once said, — "Take courage. I suffered as you now do. In the early years of my ministry, ill health and a deep consciousness of unworthiness took away my energy and hope, and I had almost resolved to quit my profession. My brother Francis begged me to persevere, to make a fairer trial; and to his influence I owe very much the continuance of labors which, I hope, have not been useless to myself or to others."

A letter written at this time to his uncle Henry well shows how deep his depression was : —

"I have no right to complain of the trials of my ministry. They are small, compared with what thousands of my brethren are called to endure. I can complain of nothing but myself. Every day teaches me more of my weakness and corruption, and yet I seem to grow no better. I hope my hearers are more profited by my discourses than I am, or I shall do little good. I can only hope that God designs to humble me, to make me feel my insufficiency, that he may lead me to ascribe the success of my labors to his blessing, whenever he may please to make them powerful to the salvation of souls."

His painful struggles, and his mode of triumphing over his weakness, are pointed out yet more fully in a letter written many years later to a young brother who had sought his advice: —

"I have passed through too much of your sad experience, to be able to treat it harshly. My own mind has often been ready to sink under like burdens. A merciful Power has sustained me, and I trust that it will sustain you. It is impossible that a man, who is at all alive to his moral and religious obligations, should enter on the ministry without many solicitudes, fears, and painful convictions of his distance from the perfection he is to teach. It is impossible for a young man, especially if he has been retired in his habits, to appear in a pulpit, — one of the most conspicuous spots on earth, — and to escape all consciousness of himself, and give himself up with an undivided heart to a work to which he is new, and to which his feelings have been but imperfectly trained. The strongest of all passions, ambition, cannot at once be put to silence, and its inconsistency with the spirit of Christianity and the ministry produces keen self-reproach.

"I tell you here what I suppose all ministers could tell, and I see not how the evil is to be avoided under the pres-

ent constitution of things. God might have committed his word to the ministry of angels, but this he has not seen fit to do; he intrusts it to earthen vessels, to frail men, to those who need moral and religious education as truly as their hearers, who reprove themselves in the reproofs they administer to others, and who are to carry others forward by advancing themselves. A deep sense of imperfection and much spiritual conflict are, then, inseparable from the work.

"Your defects do not at all discourage me. I could tell of those who have struggled through the same. I do not mean to deny their existence. The only question is, Do you thirst to be improved? Do you thirst for a generous interest in your fellow-creatures? Do you desire a new power to do good? Have you the principle of progress in you? Of this I cannot doubt, nor can you. That you are not doomed to stop for ever where you are, I know. God is giving you power in your moral nature, in Christianity, in his Holy Spirit, against selfishness, apathy, and corrupt ambition. These can be overcome, and must be, and I know not a vocation in which you can withstand them so effectually as in the ministry. The very pains you have suffered, if they do not palsy you by taking away the hope of change and progress, will do you good. They show you that you are not spiritually dead. They should satisfy you that you have the foundation of great ministerial usefulness. Set yourself to work with new earnestness for your own improvement, and seek to improve yourself not only for your own sake, but that you may more effectually improve and quicken your fellow-creatures, and God will crown your labors with success.

"What you need, what all need, is determined self-denial. You need to lay on yourself severe rules as to the distribution of time, social intercourse, &c. You need force of purpose, hardiness, and resolution. This is a

much deeper evil than selfishness or coldness. You have been brought up, perhaps, too delicately, and are paying the penalty of having faced so few storms. You have not yet learned to will with that energy and fearlessness to which so many difficulties yield. Do you ask how this force is to be gained? We know that exposure, exertion, and conflict with difficulties do much to give tone to the body, and so they do to the mind. The revolving of elevating thoughts in our closet does little for us. We must bring them home to the mind in the midst of action and difficulty. I cannot, then, consent that you should yield to your first serious trial in life. Resolve on the acquisition of moral energy, — the greatest of acquisitions, — and as far as you can command circumstances, place yourself where it may be won most effectually. I would not expose you very freely at first, any more than I would carry the invalid from his warm room into a piercing atmosphere. But take on yourself some good work, and determine to carry it through, whether hard or easy, painful or pleasant, to the extent of your power. I care little where you preach, if you find a sphere which will give a more manly tone to your mind, and inure you to wrestle with difficulties. I do not fear, nor must you. God bless you!"

In relation to the trials of young ministers, he once also said, — "You must not expect too much from your minister, especially at first. If he have sensibility, he will suffer enough from the consciousness of deficiency without being reminded of it from abroad. I cannot describe to you the load which weighed down my mind at the beginning of my ministry."

How far he was then wrapped about by chill morning fogs, which for a time, but only for a time, shut out the sunshine of God's all-embracing joy, appears also from the following description of his early experience: —

"You tell me your faith was the faith of happiness. This is never the surest. Fortunately, mine grew up under a dark sky, and the light has been increasing to this day. My passion for happiness spent itself in my youth in reverie. I never thought of realizing the vision on earth, and yet it has, in an humble manner, been realized. My faith in God, schooled by trial, looked to him first and almost exclusively for virtue, for deliverance from the great evil of sin, which I early felt to be the only true evil. The consciousness of unworthiness repressed all hopes of immediate happiness, gave me a profound conviction of the *justice* of my suffering, turned all my reproaches from Providence on myself, and not only made me incapable of murmuring, but taught me gratitude for the discipline of life. How often, in disappointment, has my first utterance been thanks to the Purifier of the soul!

"Thus my faith has never for a moment been shaken by suffering. The consciousness of unworthiness, of falling so far below my idea of duty, a feeling which hardly forsakes me, has helped much to reconcile me to outward evil. It has taken the sting from human reproach. In listening to the inward reprover I have cared little for human opinion, and have found too much truth in censure to be much displeased with any but myself. Accordingly, my religion has taken very much one form; I think of God as the Father, from whose power and love I may seek and hope for myself and others the unutterable and only good, — that of deliverance from all inward evil, of perfect, unspotted goodness, of spiritual life now and for ever.

"I have talked of myself, for, after all, our experience is the best lesson we can give to others. Your nature differs. You have had an impatient thirst for immediate happiness, which my early history, and perhaps my mental constitution, forbade me. Happiness has come to me almost as a

surprise, without plan or anticipation. You have grasped at it as almost your lawful inheritance, and had almost a feeling of wrong at disappointment."

Thus all proves that he was at this time concentred in his own soul, and seeking there to gain the unity with God which is salvation. His private papers, especially, show how intently he was striving to subdue evil, to shun temptation, and to give freest room to pure and holy thoughts. Such memorials are sacred, and should be used as under the eye of the spirit which wrote these records of its pilgrimage, and now has outgrown and dropped its mortal shell. But it may encourage sinking hearts to know that this good man was tried as they are, and agonized his way to peace. And some few hints are therefore given from his journals. They cannot, indeed, be rightly omitted, in describing one who was so bright an instance of moral victory. These papers most abound in the first years of his ministry; though the habits then formed remained strong through life. They manifest unvarying self-scrutiny, and prove by what toil his character and mind were formed. A tone of self-depreciation runs through them, — so eager is he to detect the most subtle workings of sin, to expel it, and to guard against its return. They reveal an incessant warfare, not with great evils, but with small ones, — with the remnants of evil lurking in the outskirts of his nature. It was by elaborate analysis of his own tendencies, and unfaltering aspiration to the perfect, that he sought to mould himself to a symmetrical goodness.

The headings of these papers are various; such as "Ends," "Permanent Objects," "Promises," "Practicable Excellence," "Improvements required," "Relations," "Domestic Reforms," "System," "Subjects

of Meditation," "Heart, Character," "Rules of Life," "Directory and Review," &c. It is noticeable in them, that intellect and affections are subjected to the same rigid discipline. Their pervading trait is devoutness.

"How do I deserve to be removed from my labors, — I, who labor so poorly, and with such low motives! The honor of my work I have forfeited. Let me humble myself before God, and pray for restoration to his service."

"How continually selfishness breaks forth! It must be resisted perpetually. Let nothing be spoken or done to display self; but let simple love be the spring. Do I know what such love will rise to, if cultivated?"

"Let me meditate on such subjects, and among such scenes and society, as shall humble me, raise me above human opinion, deliver me from envy, dispose me to receive reproof, and make me active."

"Never *talk* of pains, sicknesses, complaints, &c."

"Review every action, after performing it; consider from what principle it proceeded, and ask forgiveness for whatever sin has mingled in it."

"Let me not waste the day in meditation on myself, but be vigorous for some end, and every evening search deeply into my heart."

"To speak on interesting subjects is the ground of sincerity."

"Let me, when in society with those who differ from me, feel the importance of sincerity and independence. Let me consider that virtue is infinitely more important than their good opinion. Let me leave to God the impression which I make, when I frankly express feelings and opinions. Let me remember, that ultimately the friendship of the good will be secured by the discharge of duty."

"In conversation, let me feel that I shall gain more by candor than by victory."

"Let me cherish frankness by thinking of the nobleness of the quality. Restraint prevents expressions of affection, makes society painful, chills the heart."

"Eternal life is holy life, — the exercise of *love* to God and all beings."

"We must be babes, if we would have God revealed to us; must feel the weakness, ignorance, helplessness, dependence, wants of little children. We must become fools, and see that we know nothing. We must hunger and thirst, and feel a void, as having nothing. Am I a babe? Do I sit low?"

"Attain a single, simple heart. Never speak to God or man without desiring the end I profess. Let me beware of formality in discharging religious duties. Let prayer, conversation, preaching, all flow from the heart. Let me first feel the force of truth myself, and then impress it upon others. Let me feel the force of every truth and every argument with which I am conversant. Let me be not learned, but *wise*."

"Let me apply to my most painful, humble duties first and most attentively."

"Let me continually engage in labors enjoined by God, and with the ends and temper he requires, and feel a *perfect confidence* in him for support. Let my whole life be a leaning upon God."

"Let me place duty on the ground of privilege, and consider every opportunity of employing time usefully a favor; and ask only, *What is duty?* in every state."

"When any particular sin recurs to my mind, let me connect it with an act of humiliation before God, so that even sin shall lead to communion with God."

"Let me decide upon the quantity and extent of any pleasure which is right, before indulging in it, so as to avoid all painful balancing of mind. Let every meal be an exercise of self-government; eating considerately, and recalling its designed end."

"Let me live in continual preparation for prayer, in such a state of mind that I may immediately engage in it."

"Let one hour after dinner each day be given to intercession, to meditating upon and devising good, and as much of the afternoon as is necessary to accomplishing it."

"In conversation, let me draw persons from evil speaking and contention, and painful or injurious subjects, by catching some thought suggested, and making it the ground of remark."

"Let me strive to connect every personal enjoyment with acts of kindness to my neighbour. Whenever I enjoy, let me ask, How can I impart and diffuse this happiness? and let me make every pleasure a bond of friendship, a ground of communion, and esteem it chiefly on this account. When I suffer, let me ask, How can I relieve similar suffering, wherever it exists? and so quicken sympathy and improve experience."

"When I have any portion of time not devoted to any particular purpose, let me ask, Can I not spend it with God? Let me seize it as a peculiarly privileged season."

"When I suffer any pain, loss, &c., let me first ask, not, How shall I remove, but, How shall I improve it? Let me be willing to suffer for this end."

"Religious exercises are God's armour to defend us, the means of grace, support, and glory. Hence union with Christ is a ground of fruitfulness. Christ is all-important to us as a substantial, steady exhibition of virtue, not fleeting or unsubstantial."

"Have access to God, as if introduced to his presence. Seek God; seek the sight of him; *observe him in all things.*"

"Let me every day give away something, and daily deny myself something, that I may have more to give."

"Be very careful to open and close the day with devotion. Pray before going to meals, or entering society, or

engaging in study and composition. On Sunday, let me preach over to myself the sermon and pray for its success, before I go to the desk; read works of sober devotion till the exercises of the day are over; after service, consider how far I have been faithful and conducted as a minister should; after supper, retire to examine, humble, and devote myself; and until bed-time, reflect upon the character and love of the Redeemer."

"What objects interest me most? Is my mind in such a state, that a certain change of circumstances would leave me desolate, leave my mind craving and empty, leave me nothing to live for, cast a gloom on all prospects? What is it round which my affections cleave?"

"Have my thoughts this day been governed, my attention concentrated? What have I learned? What has constituted my chief pleasure? Have I been humble? Have I had peace? Have I acted from love? Whom have I made happy? Have I been sincere? Have I been in conversation modest and ingenuous, patient, attentive? What temptations have I encountered and opposed? What pleasant objects have allured? what pains terrified? Have I enjoyed the light of God's countenance? Whence has this day taken its character?"

"I wish to gain a *calm energy*, a strong principle of love and independence."

"I wish to gain *clearness of conception*, a distinct and simple mode of considering objects. I should be careful at first to separate from a subject every thing foreign to it, and place it in as clear a light as possible."

"Amidst the multitude of objects perceived and remembered, there must be selection. Great objects make great minds. Hence God, eternity, heaven, the kingdom of Christ, the perfection of the world, our highest good, — these should be our *objects*."

"To perceive the *true end* of existence, and the *means*

to that end, is to improve the mind. We have a complex end, yet a harmonious one. The glory and kingdom of God, the holiness and happiness of mankind, our own eternal good, — these conspire."

"A wise man seeks to shine in himself; a fool to outshine others. The former is humbled by a sense of his infirmities; the latter is lifted up by the discovery of the faults of others. The wise man considers what he wants; the fool, what he abounds in. The wise man is happy in his own approbation; the fool, in the applause of his fellows."

"I ought to place myself in situations where there will be the greatest stimulus to active thought and good exertion, — where I shall find no comfort without these, — where I shall be called to think and act *impartially*, — where every natural principle and relation will impel me in the right way. Let me place myself under obligation to live usefully. Let this be the habitual question, — How can I now in such a scene imitate Christ, breathe his spirit?"

"Do I read without prejudice, — without wishing any system or doctrine to be true, — without desiring to find any false, — with a willingness to receive as true, and to obey, whatever is taught in Scripture, — with a sense of the *infinite importance* of the truth, — with a readiness to sacrifice any pursuit, wish, gratification, which militates with it?"

"Should I not propose an end, when I write? and are there not certain rules which will apply to the understanding, and by conforming to which the most important thoughts and illustrations will be suggested? What is meant by a flow of thought? what precedes, what causes it? In writing, should not one topic be always kept in view? Attention must be concentrated. Thus invention will be aided. Thus all connected ideas will start forth; and the whole subject will be viewed in an extensive light."

"Will not thoughts take a direction from the end, tem-

per, and disposition? Are not thoughts *voluntary*? do they not originate in *active* principles? All my thoughts, however unobserved, have relations expressive of my character. Let me perpetually examine whether subjects of thought are not so related to myself as to flatter or excite some selfish passion. Let me not be an egotist in thought."

"Is not every thought which continues in the mind, in fact, *chosen*? Is not the heart exercised about it? Am *I* not voluntary in cherishing it? Our *objects* of thought should be chosen with a view to sanctity of heart, to conformation of our nature to God and heaven. There should be some rule or law by which to judge our thoughts. One general rule is, — Are my thoughts *pleasing to God*? another is, — Are they *useful*? "

"I should constantly have some *end* in view, in thinking. My thoughts should be arranged; there should be some directing principle for them. A passive mind rests in the perception of an object. The active mind inquires for its use, cause, consequences, relations, signification, past state, tendency, changes, &c. Every thing has innumerable connections and dependencies. These are the objects of thought. In connecting with a thing *all that belongs to it*, we become *acquainted with it*. This thorough acquaintance with all objects of perception is what we should propose."

"We should desire to have every idea connected in our minds, as its object is in nature, so that a clear view of it shall arise before us. *Distinct conception* is important. Wide views of beings and events should be desired. We should seek to see all things in their just extent, clearly, forcibly. All thoughts which they suggest should *be connected in their natural order, be grasped at once, so as to form a complete view.*"

"Every thing may be viewed as a sign of God's will and character; and our thoughts, after tracing an object,

should at length ascend to this all-important end. — Should I be sluggish in such a world as this ? "

"The perfection of mind is to have a propensity to seek agreeable and interesting objects, to have attention turn spontaneously to beauties of nature, excellencies of human character, God's perfections. A mind thus filled is always improving, always happy. A mind which turns to disagreeable things, party agitations, future uncertainties, &c., must be depraved. All objects may be viewed as expressions of goodness."

" How to keep the mind open to every source of enjoyment, to the *little pleasures* which surround us ? There is a possibility of laboring too hard for this. We generally get so far absorbed in some care, as to become insensible to the *variety* of pleasing objects. Is there not an easy, disengaged state of mind very favorable to a succession of minute enjoyments ? There is sometimes an exhilaration of mind which throws a glory over every object, and seems to give new sensibility to every taste."

" He is miserable who makes pleasure his business. God designs us for activity, pursuit of ends, — efficiency. Action originating in God, and attended with the consciousness of his favor, is the highest source of enjoyment. Every pleasure should be an expression of God's pleasure, and should bind us to those around us. Does not this state of mind invite pleasures of every description ? Does it not open our eyes to all varieties of good ? "

" Is it not possible to allow no unpleasant objects to dwell upon our minds any longer than we can derive benefit from them ? May we not bring our sensibilities to pain very much under our own control, and use them only for discipline ? How should every opportunity be seized for *invigorating* our minds and active powers, perseverance, firmness, fortitude, application, so that energetic, successful, unwearied labor may be the result ! "

His inward state is with like simplicity made manifest in papers of a devotional character, written apparently in part for his own private use, in part as preparative for the family altar and the pulpit. The tone of his piety, pervading as it did all thought and action, may be best understood from a few extracts.

"O God! the Centre of all pure spirits, the Everlasting Goodness, we come to thee. Thou art the happiness of heaven; and thy presence, felt by the soul that communes with thee, is the highest good. Ignorant of thee, we know nothing aright; wandering from thee, we lose all light and peace; forgetting thee, we turn our minds from the noblest object of thought; and without love to thee, we are separated from infinite loveliness, and from the only substantial and sufficient source of joy. Thou hast an inexhaustible fulness of life; and thine unceasing communications take nothing from thy power to bless. Thou art infinitely better than all thy gifts, and through all we desire to rise to thee."

"We thank thee for the proofs thou givest of thy essential, pure, and perfect benignity, so that through all clouds and darkness we can see a gracious Father. In this world of shadows, this fleeting tide of things, this life of dreams, we rejoice that there is a Reality, sure, unchanging, in which we may find rest; that there is a Power which can cleanse us from all sin, raise us to all virtue and happiness, and give us endless growth. How great is our privilege, that we have such an object for our hope and trust, — that our souls may contemplate infinite loveliness, greatness, goodness, — that we may at all times commune with the Best of Beings!"

"For thy inviolable faithfulness, thy impartial justice, thy unerring wisdom, thy unfathomable counsels, thy unwearied

care, thy tender mercy, thy resistless power, we adore thee. For the splendor spread over all thy works, and still more for the higher beauty of the soul, of which the brightness of creation is but the emblem and faint shadow, we thank thee. O, let thy love affect our hearts, let us feel its reality, constancy, tenderness! To thee we owe all. Thine is the health of our bodies, the light of our minds, the warmth of affection, the guiding voice of conscience. Whatever knowledge or virtuous impressions we have derived from the society of friends, the conversation of the wise and good, the care of instructers, the researches of past ages, we desire to trace gratefully to thee. We rejoice that we depend on thee, the Father of Spirits, whose requisitions are so reasonable, whose government is so mild, whose influences are so ennobling. How unspeakably great is thy goodness! And all our other blessings are as nothing, when compared with the sublime, pure, infinite glory, to which we are called by the gospel of thy Son."

"We are infinitely honored in being under thy protection, and having all our affairs overruled by thy providence. We thank thee for every good influence imparted to our minds, for every holy aspiration, every motive of conscience; for the countless materials of happiness, and our power over nature; for the light which thou hast thrown upon the darkness of life's trials; for the success with which thou hast crowned the labors of reflecting men in exploring thy works; for the blessings of civilization and knowledge; for our capacities of improvement; for our domestic relations, and for their influence in softening and improving our nature; for all the wisdom, purity, love, communicated to the human race; for the illustrious examples thou hast raised up, in successive ages, of enlightened piety and disinterested virtue; for the influence which eminent men have exerted, for the splendor they have shed on human nature, for the encouragement of their example in the

pursuit of excellence; and above all, for our redemption by Jesus Christ, the privilege of access to thee, the hope of pardon, the influences of thy spirit, the prospect of immortality."

"We thank thee, that thou hast set us in families, in neighbourhoods, in communities; that thou hast made of one blood all men, thus uniting us in and by a common nature to the whole human race, and giving us means, motives, and opportunities to exercise a continually extending love. We thank thee for Jesus Christ; that he came, not to bless one people or one age, but all nations and times; that he came to establish such a religion, to seal such a covenant; that he came to be a bright manifestation of God, to give everlasting happiness. For a Saviour so excellent, so suited to our wants, so fitted to awaken our love, to inspire holy and delightful attachment, to call out our whole hearts, we thank thee. We bless thee that man's sins have served to manifest and glorify thy mercy, to show forth thine essential, inexhaustible goodness, so that our unworthiness has formed a new ground for love and thankfulness to thee."

"May Christ be precious to us; teach us his worth, his glory, so that we may love him and rejoice in him with joy unspeakable. May a sense of the greatness of the evils from which he came to deliver, and of the blessings which he can bestow, excite our sensibility, gratitude, desire, and lead our minds to dwell on him. Let sin be our greatest burden; may all life's ills seem light in comparison with it; may we groan for deliverance from it, and be more earnest in resisting it than in resisting all other evils; and may we welcome Christ as our saviour from it."

"Communicate and quicken spiritual life. May our souls be warm with life. Save us from an inanimate and sluggish state. Teach us thy purity, how great thy abhor-

rence of evil, how irreconcilable thy hatred of it, and may we all partake of the same abhorrence of sin. Increase our sensibility to evil; may we shun every appearance of it and repel the first temptation; and in a world where example is so corrupt, we beseech thee to arm us with a holy fortitude."

"Inspire us with a generous love of virtue, of rectitude, of holiness. May we prefer it even to life. Animate us to adhere to good in every danger. May nothing on earth move us or shake our steadfastness. Increase our sensibility to good; may we see more and more its loveliness and beauty."

"Animate us to cheerfulness. May we have a joyful sense of our blessings, learn to look on the bright circumstances of our lot, and maintain a perpetual contentedness under thy allotments. Fortify our minds against disappointment and calamity. Preserve us from despondency, from yielding to dejection. Teach us that no evil is intolerable but a guilty conscience, and that nothing can hurt us, if with true loyalty of affection we keep thy commandments and take refuge in thee."

"May every day add brightness and energy to our conceptions of thy lovely and glorious character. Give us a deeper sense of thy presence, and instruct us to nourish our devoutness by every scene of nature and every event of providence. Assist us to consecrate our whole being and existence to thee, our understandings to the knowledge of thy character, our hearts to the veneration and love of thy perfections, our wills to the choice of thy commands, our active energies to the accomplishment of thy purposes, our lives to thy glory, and every power to the imitation of thy goodness. Be thou the centre, life, and sovereign of our souls."

Thus earnestly was Mr. Channing seeking perfect peace and unclouded light. He believed, and acted on the faith, that only the purity of heart which is blessed by seeing God can fit a man to be the spiritual teacher of his fellows; and as the condition for usefulness, he opened his inmost will to receive the Divine life of love. It certainly is not surprising, that a nature so sensitive and tender, especially when compelled to undue action by ill health, should have manifested its struggles in a somewhat austere gravity of manner. But water gains crystal clearness by percolating the sands; and the very severity of his self-discipline gave sweetness more and more to his social intercourse.

For the first few months after his settlement, Mr. Channing lived, as we have seen, with some parishioners and friends. But even their devoted kindness could not fill the void in his affections; and in a letter to his sister Ann, to whom he was most fondly attached, we find him writing, — "I am sad; my sister, come and cheer me." It was soon in his power, however, to gratify this desire for domestic love by removing his mother and the family to Boston. His brother Francis and he had long since agreed, that, for the end of insuring their ability to aid their mother and her other children, one of them should remain unmarried for at least ten years; and as his salary was a more certain income than his brother's professional gains, who, though rapidly rising to distinction as a lawyer, was not yet established in lucrative business, he now took it upon himself to fulfil the arrangement. So he wrote to his mother that he had a parsonage which he could not occupy, and fuel which he could not burn; and that she would

save him much waste and trouble by turning them to good use. He well knew that she could not afford to leave her house and large garden at Newport, without such an addition to her means as he thus placed at her disposal; but he chose to represent himself as the person obliged, by pleading his need of her guardianship. She yielded to his affectionate appeal, and in a short time he had the satisfaction of seeing the home circle gathered round him, beneath his own roof, blessed by his bounty, and enjoying the best opportunities for happiness and improvement.

The tact with which he sought to conceal — even from himself, if it might be — his kindness, proved its temper. His father had left so small a property, that it was quite inadequate to the support and education of the growing family; and by surrendering for their use the greater part of his salary William changed their condition from that of want to one of competence. But while thus supplying them with the means of comfort and culture, his words and acts rather tended to give the impression that they were nowise dependent upon him, but only on the family estate. Without, of course, employing deception, he yet was sedulous to keep from the partakers of his benefits the knowledge that he was their benefactor. "I was often amused, and still oftener filled with veneration," writes a brother, "by the mode in which he talked of the necessity of punctually paying his board to our mother, and placed his funds in her hands, as he said, for safe keeping, withdrawing only such trifling sums as he absolutely needed." All extra fees were given, as their rightful perquisite, to his sisters; and as years passed on, and the wants and desires of the various members of the family

unfolded, each day but gave new proofs of his ever thoughtful, ever delicate affection. His outlays for them, in addition to his large charities abroad, were so considerable, that, though his salary was for those times ample, being at first twelve hundred, and afterwards fifteen hundred dollars, he never laid up a cent, and was often wholly destitute. "Well do I remember," said one of his near relatives, "how pained he was at the time of my marriage, when he wished to make me a wedding present, and had but fifty dollars to give. He could not help then telling me how poor he was." Thus, for ten years and more, did he faithfully redeem the first words spoken to his mother after his ordination, when she said,—"Now, William, I must give you up!" "O, no!" he replied, "you shall never find that the duties of the Christian minister are inconsistent with those of the son."

A slight sketch of his constant little sacrifices in the petty details of life may most clearly show how he appeared to those who lived with him in the nearest relations, and who knew him best. He had always been strict in his habits of self-denial, in food, dress, and every mode of expenditure; but he was now more simple than ever, and seemed to have become incapable of any form of self-indulgence. He took the smallest room in the house for his study, though he might easily have commanded one more light, airy, and in every way more suitable; and chose for his sleeping-chamber an attic, which he shared with a younger brother. The furniture of the latter might have answered for the cell of an anchorite, and consisted of a hard mattress on a cot-bedstead, plain wooden chairs and table, with matting on the floor. It was without fire, and to cold

he was through life extremely sensitive ; but he never complained, or appeared in any way to be conscious of inconvenience. "I recollect," says his brother, "after one most severe night, that in the morning he sportively thus alluded to his suffering : — 'If my bed were my country, I should be somewhat like Bonaparte ; I have no control except over the part that I occupy ; the instant I move, frost takes possession.'" In sickness only would he change for the time his apartment, and accept a few comforts. The dress, too, that he habitually adopted, was of most inferior quality ; and garments were constantly worn which the world would call mean, though an almost feminine neatness preserved him from the least appearance of personal neglect. The only luxury he would indulge himself in was annually to lay out a small sum in increasing his scanty library. "Never did I know him to be guilty of a selfish act," testifies his brother ; "and he shrank from any mention of his incessant kindness, as if the least allusion to it gave him pain." These few mementos are, indeed, quite unpretending ; but their very humbleness may serve to show how vital was the root of love from which such ever fresh disinterestedness bloomed forth.

A few further extracts from his journals will exhibit how his social affections were trained to an unreserved loyalty to conscience.

"Let me pay peculiar attention to family prayer, to make Scripture interesting and prayer solemn. Let me pray for them in secret daily. Let me attend to their reading, improve their minds. Let me attend to the religion of the domestics, and give them equal privileges with the rest on the Sabbath and in the family exercises. Let me regard

the wants of all, and live sacrificing my own will and desires to theirs, abounding in affectionate services, and remembering them always as those whom God has pointed out to me as my peculiar objects.

"Let me endeavour to interest all in good pursuits, continually propose kind ends, make active benevolence their spring, and excite them to a course of pious, loving life.

"Let me in conversation avoid finding fault, satire, severity; let me express the spirit and power, rather than the speculations, of divinity; let me communicate liberally whatever knowledge I acquire, and raise our social intercourse.

"Let me encourage and share innocent pleasures, contribute all in my power to their happiness, make them feel my affection, and convince them that love, not bigoted severity, leads to my cautious and solemn admonition.

"Let me cultivate harmony and mutual affection, strive to make home interesting from peace and love and mutual interest and regard.

"Encourage private prayer morning and evening among them.

"Let me introduce pleasing and impressive works on religion, which will lead to conversation, inquiry, &c.

"Let me introduce society, entertaining, instructive, and tending to moral and religious improvement.

"Let me observe what in other families tends to happiness, and improvement, and religion.

"Let me promote unity of sentiment, especially on religious and most interesting subjects.

"Let me live with them as immortal beings, and have in view the end of present existence.

"In the morning, when I see any of my friends after the night's separation, let me receive them as new gifts from God, as raised from the dead.

"My mother has been quite sick. I have never seen her so much reduced. For a day or two my fears were not a

little excited. I felt more sensibly than I ever did before, that this nearest, best, of earthly friends was mortal. Thanks to a merciful Providence, she is regaining her strength. It is a pleasing consideration, that her children have been able to repay a little of her kindness; but how little can parental kindness be requited!"

That his sense of duty was at this time even tyrannical Mr. Channing recognized in later life, and regretted that this stern nurse had cramped the action of his native impulses by too close swathing; but he had not then learned that the true art of moral culture is to balance extravagant tendencies by quickening those which are languid, and that growth is a safer means of harmony in character than repression. He painfully felt, too, that his solemnity repelled those whom he longed to win, and cast a shade over the circle he would have rejoiced to brighten. And, indeed, had it not been for his greatness of heart, dignity, assiduous affection, and evidently lofty aims, his constant staidness of deportment would have been irksome. For the other members of the family presented in manners an amusing contrast to this beloved friend, whom, highly as they honored him, it was not in their will to imitate. The mother, as we have seen, had inherited from her father a vivacious temper, keen perceptions, a wit as sharp as it was droll, and a sincerity of thought and speech, which made light of conventionalities, and swept away respectable pretences like cobwebs. Her sallies, given out in the plainest Anglo-Saxon, sometimes sounded strangely as a response to her son's guarded words, especially when the characters of others, or passing events, were under discussion. And the hilarity of the younger brothers and sisters would have jarred in discord with his taciturn ways, had

not his considerateness been so genuine. Self-possessed in the midst of them, however, he allayed all differences, and melted them into one. He devoted himself also to the culture of his sisters, read and conversed with them at certain portions of the day, was watchful over their manners, and as they came forward in life schooled himself to leave behind the student's gown, and accompanied them into the delightful circles which the influence of his talents opened to the members of his household. In the friendly groups, too, which his mother's hospitable and genial temper gathered round her fireside, he endeavoured to act his part. But it was plain that he was not at home in festive scenes of any kind. His conversation was at all times and in all places connected, grave, and on themes of high interest. He could not unbend. And intent as he was on subjects which absorbed his whole spiritual energy, he actually had neither inclination nor even the sense of liberty to relax. In a word, he was striving for ever to press onward and upward ; and chiefly longed to bear those whom he loved with him in his ascent.

But though thus serious, he was most loving. His gentleness of character showed itself in all social relations. If controversies and warm debates arose, he had the skill to smooth the storm by soft words and calm looks. If scandal was introduced, he changed the topic ; and if any one's reputation was attacked, he would say, with quiet firmness, — "Pray, stop ! for if you continue these remarks, I shall feel bound to repeat every word to the person of whom you are speaking." The effect was to stifle all desire of crimination. The same disposition appeared in his liberality toward those who differed in religious opinions. "William is no Quaker, you

see, said his mother one day to a Friend with whom he was pleasantly talking upon their opposite views. "No," answered he; "and E—— did not expect to find me one; but there is a common ground of Christian feeling, where, without distinction of name, we can unite in belief, that the sincere worshippers of God are the accepted of God."

As another illustration, this little incident may be mentioned. Busy in studies, in visits among his parish, and in charitable movements, or calls on the sick and needy, the week passed away and left him on Saturday usually unprepared. A colored teacher, who was occupied in his school duties on other days, but who was anxious to improve himself by Mr. Channing's society, took occasion of the leisure afternoon to visit him, and frequently prolonged his stay into the evening. The mother was greatly annoyed at seeing her son's last precious hours thus broken in upon. But though it obliged him oftentimes to sit up late in the night, and to finish his sermons while the morning bell was ringing, he would never allow his colored friend to be denied.

Generosity pervaded his conduct. To the erring he was consistently forbearing. Two instances may show this trait. A domestic, in whom the family placed confidence, professed "to be converted to religion," at some revival in the society to which she belonged, and was very strict in her devotions and attendance at meeting. The members of the family soon detected her, however, in the commission of indiscriminate petty thefts. When accused, she was highly indignant at being suspected; but as the property was found in her possession, her hypocrisy was clear. Mr. Channing did nothing in relation to the affair but to converse with her, giving

her the most earnest counsel in his power, and then allowed her to depart. He expressed for her only the deepest pity ; mentioning as his reason, that " she had been brought up in an almshouse, and had received no good influences in early life." The amount taken was quite large, but he considered it wrong to inflict a legal penalty upon one whom society had so neglected, and, if he had followed his own inclination, would have kept her in his service, and have sought to reclaim her. On another occasion, though at a somewhat later period of life, he rented a place in the country for the summer, with the obligation on his part of keeping it in order. The gardener whom he hired, however, proved faithless, sold the valuable vegetables and fruits, and injured the grounds and trees by his carelessness, leaving the loss to fall on his employer. The man became sick, and for the end of encouraging him to reform, Mr. Channing paid him his full wages, and, after exposing to him the baseness of his conduct, gave him his best advice and pardoned the offence.

The distaste for social enjoyments, which has been noticed, doubtless was increased by Mr. Channing's poor state of health ; for lassitude followed all exertion, and physical depression cast a chill upon a naturally glowing temper. And for the end of enabling all to discriminate between the essential man and the accidents of his organization, it seems necessary to set this fact of his chronic debility in a distinct light. In our present ignorance of the relations of body to spirit, indeed, we can never decide how far morbid action in either is a cause or an effect ; but their mutual dependence is plain enough. It needs only to be said, then, that from the time of his residence at Richmond till his death he

never knew a day of unimpaired vigor. The common services of the pulpit prostrated him; unusual efforts brought fever alternating with dulness; earnest conversation cost sleepless nights; exercise, except of the most moderate kind, was rather exhausting than refreshing; he yearly lost weeks and months by inability to study or write; and to one who knew him, it only seemed surprising that he could accomplish so much. Had he but retained the buoyancy of early years, he might by scholarship and by public and social labors have shed abroad a light, beside which his actual success would be dim. On the other hand, indeed, it may be asked, whether his river of life did not gain depth from the narrow channel through which it was forced to roll? Fortitude, purity, concentration, may have in some degree compensated him for lack of strength. But to one who believes that God has for ever established a harmony between the spiritual and natural worlds, it must in all cases appear probable that the teachings of health will be more large, sound, varied, rich, than those of sickness. Yet he struggled bravely with his fate. He knew that his own imprudence had done much to cause his infirmity, and humbly accepted the limits which it imposed, while he steadily sought to regain and keep the largest measure of power. "The very scrupulous care that he took of himself," writes a sister, "was a sacrifice to duty. Most beautiful, too, was his thoughtfulness to avoid being a burden upon others. His patience was unvarying. I can recall one instance of a feverish attack during the heat of summer. We had been fanning him during the day, and he had seemed as tranquil as a sleeping infant; but to our great surprise, when the physician came in towards evening, he entreated him to give

him something to allay the restlessness which was almost beyond his bearing or power of control. But when was he otherwise than gentle ! " Thus his very weaknesses formed a new bond of affectionate respect. He saw with pity the habits of effeminacy and self-indulgence which constant regard to one's own state too often breeds in the invalid, and systematically guarded against such temptations. With the pride of an energetic character, too, he felt the shame of seeming to be a valetudinarian. But the keenest pain he suffered was from being forced to halt when he would have hastened, and to leave untried many a promising plan of self-culture and of usefulness. This was the true cross to a spirit so earnest in hope, comprehensive in sympathy, conscientious, and brave ; and nothing could have been more manly than the uncomplaining serenity with which he bore it.

Mr. Channing chiefly lamented his want of strength because he was thereby hampered in his private studies and in schemes of professional activity. He did what he could, and too often much more than he ought, but fell far short of his ideal, and saw all round him fields white for the harvest, when his arm was too feeble to put in the sickle and reap. Yet, from his first appearance in the pulpit, he made a sensation such as had been long unknown in Boston, distinguished as many of her ministers justly were. The highest among them, Dr. Kirkland, said truly of him and of Buckminster, who came forward two years later, that they had introduced " a new era in preaching." Their congregations were thronged ; and when either of them was to take his turn at the Thursday lecture in Chauncy Place, the usually thin audience at that antiquated service became a crowd.

Immediately after Mr. Channing's settlement, the small society in Federal street was much enlarged by the numbers drawn around the young, devoted, eloquent pastor; and from that time forward steadily grew, until, in 1809, the old church was taken down, and the corner-stone laid of the large building which now occupies its place. The devoutly disposed in the community looked to him with the hope that he might be a means of fanning once more to flame the smouldering ashes on the altars of piety. The seriousness of his deportment, the depth and sweetness of his voice, the pathos with which he read the Scriptures and sacred poetry, the solemnity of his appeals, his rapt and kindling enthusiasm, his humble, trustful spirit of prayer, his subdued feeling, so expressive of personal experience, made religion a new reality; while his whole air and look of spirituality won them to listen by its mild and somewhat melancholy beauty. The most trifling saw in him a man thoroughly in earnest, who spoke not of dreams and fictions, but of facts with which he was intimately conversant; and the serious gladly welcomed one who led the way and beckoned them nearer to the holy of holies which they aspired to enter. Intellectual people, too, were attracted by the power and grace of his pulpit addresses. He opened to them a large range of thought, presented clear, connected, and complete views of various topics, roused their faculties of discernment by nice discriminations and exact statements, and gratified their taste by the finished simplicity of his style. But the novelty, perhaps, that chiefly stirred his audiences was the directness with which he even then brought his Christian principles to bear upon actual life. With no flights of mystic exaltation, forgetful in raptures of the earth, with no abstract

systems of metaphysical theology, with no coldly elegant moral essays, did he occupy the minds of his hearers, but with near and sublime objects made evident by faith, with lucid truths approved alike by Scripture and by conscience, and with duties pressed urgently home upon all as rules for daily practice. He saw, and made others see, that life was no play-place, but a magnificent scene for glorifying God, and a rich school for the education of spirits. He showed to men the substance, of which surrounding appearances are the shadow; and behind transient experiences revealed the spiritual laws which they express. Thus he gathered round him an enlarging circle of devoted friends, who gratefully felt that they drank in from him new life. The old members of the Society, too, for the most part simple people of plain manners, took the heartiest delight in his services, while feeling just pride in his talents. And the few distinguished persons of the congregation knew well how to appreciate his rare gifts, and to extend his fame. Thus was he in every way favorably situated to call out his highest powers; and his journals show how ardently he strove to fulfil the hopes which he knew were cherished for his usefulness.

"My great end is the promotion of the moral and religious interests of mankind, the cause of virtue, the gospel. This is my occupation. This end may be accomplished everywhere. Let me make this study the *great end* of life. Let me study for this. Let my exercise, relaxation, visits, prayers, all have this in view. Let me eat and sleep for this. Let me never lose sight of my flock, constantly oversee them, never leave them. Let me strive to make them fruitful to God, direct and excite exertion for good, exhibit an example of the life of God."

"Weekly lectures are highly important. What an influence in the commonwealth would a general attention to religion in the capital exert! May not the present increased interest be a sprinkling before the shower?"

"Meetings to pray for the spirit. Let me when among Christians, when visiting them, pray with them, that men may be awakened to religious attention, and desire that God be glorified, Christ obeyed, heaven sought."

"Religious *union*. How to make them feel a desire of assisting, quickening each other in a religious course. Visit the church often in a religious manner. Pray in private and in public for this union. Make this the subject of conversation. Meetings of the church; and in order to make them useful, let me labor to become an extemporaneous preacher. The church should feel that on their prayers and zeal the salvation of others depends. Let me *now* strive to quicken my church, while attention is awakened to religion."

"The influence of the church I need. I can do little myself. I want the brethren to be able to converse, the sisters at home to be able to instil into the minds of their children religious truth. I should lend suitable books, exalt their intellectual powers, direct their habitual thoughts.

"Have I not reason to fear that many are destitute of love to God, to Christ, to the church, to man? Do they not confide in a course of negative goodness? Are they not full of false hopes from the performance of particular duties, abstinence from great crimes? Are they not easy and satisfied because they give no positive evidence of irreligion, not because they have positive evidence of religion? Do they not mistake habit for principle? Do the hopes, pleasures, duties, difficulties of religion form any part of domestic conversation? Is holiness an end? Is God all in all? Is Christ all in all to them? Is love the habit of their soul, operating in their whole conduct?"

"Christ came to recover men from sin. A change of heart is the object of the gospel. In this consists the redemption of Christ. It becomes men to weep, to feel true, hearty sorrow at sin itself, to abhor and condemn themselves as without excuse, to feel themselves dependent upon free, unmerited, unobligated, sovereign grace for pardon and renewal. Repentance includes unconditional submission, choice and desire that God should reign, should accomplish his will, should dispose of his creatures as seems to him best. It supposes subjection of ourselves and others wholly to his will. It gives all things in all times and all places to him as his own for ever."

"The spirit of God is the blessing of the new covenant. The knowledge, love, imitation, service, and enjoyment of God through eternity are all included in this gift. There can be no other rational, eternal blessedness. The spirit of God operates on the heart, creates new exercises, and dwells in the soul of Christians by constantly and immediately supporting all good affections. Every man must be new-born, have a new heart, a new principle, end, motive, disposition, a change by the spirit into a meek, submissive, self-renouncing, self-abhorring, benevolent state of soul, before he can believe, approve, choose the gospel, and receive the kingdom of heaven."

"I must make the knowledge of divine truth my end, and therefore labor to preserve a mind fitted to discover, and a heart ready to receive, instruction. The disposal of time, food, &c., should all be directed to this object; and every truth I receive I should labor immediately to impress on my own heart and on others."

"Let me unite with the most serious statedly in prayer, for the *revival of religion* in the society. Let the promotion of religion be the sole end of all exertions; let nothing else be named. O the happiness of a religious society!"

"I ought to bear my people on my heart; feel the worth

of their souls, that they have the capacity to serve, enjoy, glorify God for ever; feel continual heaviness and sorrow for their neglect of God; be fervent, unceasing in prayer; make their spiritual prosperity my joy; indulge in no pleasure, engage in no pursuit, which may not subserve this end; let every worldly interest which will drive them from my mind be resigned; let my highest anxiety, fear, hope, desire, affection, be exercised toward them, that God may have a people among them. Let me be the servant of the least among them for this purpose."

"Let me never talk of my zeal for souls, *except with God;* let me avoid all egotism, and carefully abstain from mention of personal experience on this subject; let me never condemn other ministers as cold; let me work where my work will not be known, among the poor, ignorant, &c. Let me lead the serious from dependence on me, from high thoughts of my society, to Christ. Let me labor most where I shall experience least approbation, and attend chiefly to the insensible and sluggish. Let me do much in secret, pray, struggle, and purify myself for my people; let none know."

"I am sensible of a want of tenderness in my preaching. I want to preach striking, rather than melting, sermons. Let me seek that my heart be soft."

"God alone can soften my people; let me labor, therefore, chiefly in prayer. There is great disregard to prayer among us. In public worship, preaching is exalted above prayer. Let me strive to make this part of the service more interesting."

"Let me separate a portion of time for considering the nature and importance of my office, and for exciting a holy, devout zeal, a fervent, sincere desire for the holiness and happiness of my people."

"Let my visits be ministerial, serious; let me speak plainly on religion, attend to the character of individuals,

observe their wants. What a waste of time to make other visits! If I should see a man of business give up two hours a day to making mere calls, I should think him an idler. How am I better? Whence my timidity on the subject of religion? I do not carry conversation far enough to be serious, earnest, and hence seize no end with sufficient force."

"Let me give courses of lectures upon various subjects adapted to different ages and conditions; a course to parents and heads of families; to the church; on church history, with applications of prophecy; on the evidences, for the young; weekly exhortations to children; a course on the duties of the young; on Jewish history and antiquities; on the testimony of nature to God; a course of expositions; a series on the parables; &c."

"My preaching does not seem to be followed with a devout, grateful, submissive, holy spirit in my church. I do not witness fervor and happiness from the prospect and hope of heaven. Their religious conversation limited to a few topics, heartless, cold, uninteresting! Whence is this? I feel increasing doubts about my success. However, we are commanded not to faint. I say to myself, One soul saved; and I feel that such an object deserves all exertion."

"The children are members of the church of Christ; earnest, affectionate attention is due to them. I must catechize them, pray with them, teach them to pray; suggest subjects which they can illustrate; give them texts to remember; instruct them in the duties peculiar to their age, and in the doctrines suited to them."

These resolves were carried into deeds; and he was at this period an indefatigable pastor. He visited constantly, had periodical prayer-meetings, and meetings for conversation and religious instruction, — varying them as seemed best fitted to keep interest alive, — and, in-

deed, practised most of the modes, which, though rare then, have now become common, for quickening religious sensibility and producing Christian union. To the sick he was a faithful friend, and entered into their anxieties and hopes with a touching devoutness, that lifted up their spirits as on angel wings in prayer. Into the chamber of death he came with the auroral light of the resurrection upon his brow. And to the mourner he showed the manna of consolation for ever dropping on the desert. Yet sometimes his quick sensibility subdued him. When one of his oldest and most dear parishioners, Mr. Thomas Davis, was dying, he left the weeping group around the bedside, and coming to the church amidst the then small band of his parishioners, so intimate with each other that they seemed like one family, he endeavoured to commend the departing soul to the Heavenly Father. But his voice died in the utterance; he sank his head on the desk, and burst into tears. A sob ran through the congregation, and then there was stillness. On one other occasion, when visiting a family lately bereaved, he sat down with the circle of mourners, and after remaining for a long time in silence, as if overcome with the fulness of his feelings, he uttered a groan, rose, and left the room. But these were exceptions. He usually had perfect self-control, and wore an air of serene cheerfulness, that spread a contagious calmness over troubled hearts.

In the children of the society he felt the deepest interest. He liked to gather them after service around the pulpit; when, coming down, he would converse with them, and give them familiar lessons. This was before the custom of Sunday schools was introduced. Later in his ministry, he and his friend Thacher prepared

their well-known catechism. But at first he confined himself chiefly to oral instruction. He is remembered as having been very successful in making these addresses simple and attractive, clothing beautiful thoughts in intelligible language, and addressing them to his young friends with a benignant smile, that won their confidence and opened their hearts. He once pleasantly remarked, that the most satisfactory compliment he had ever received was from a little girl, who told her mother, — "I understood every word he said." His respect for children was, indeed, singularly strong ; and *respect* is the only word that can fitly express the trust he felt and manifested in their purity. He had, from the first, a profound love for their native honor, their quick moral intuitions, their truth and innocence. And once, when looking at the corpse of a beautiful child, he said, — "I consider those so early taken as mysteriously privileged."

While thus devoted to his own congregation, and made every year more and more an object of interest to the community at large by the good influences which were seen to flow from his pulpit, Mr. Channing became widely known also by the useful custom of exchanges, so universal in New England. In making these he limited himself to no denomination, but freely held intercourse with all who were seeking divine light and life. So indiscriminate, indeed, was he in this respect, that it was found difficult for many years to assign him a place in any of the sects, which the increasing temper of exclusiveness was gradually forming. Alternately he was claimed and disowned by all, being himself, as we shall hereafter see, chiefly anxious to shun controversy and to keep the transparent heaven of religion unobscured by

the clouds of theological disputes. Still, it was chiefly in Boston, and among the liberal divines of that capital, that his exchanges were necessarily made ; and in their societies he was at all times a favorite preacher, though not a few complained of his gloom, and very many preferred the sententious wisdom, quaintness, sagacity, and rich variety of Kirkland, and the chaste earnestness, the scholarly fulness of allusion, the elegance of style, and eloquent oratory of Buckminster. Such hearers often carried doubtless to the religious assembly their delightful associations with the superior conversational gifts of those gentlemen, who were both distinguished for wit, pleasantry, anecdote, and that easy play of fancy which illuminates with transient charm the topic of the hour, and whose manners contrasted favorably with Mr. Channing's absorbed air, his almost judicial moral severity, and his evident distaste for the current trifles which polish the surface of life.

To each of these distinguished men he was bound by ties of strong friendship, and he felt for their talents and acquirements a respect which they cordially reciprocated. Under date of November, 1806, we find Mr. Buckminster thus writing to him from Paris, whither he had been driven to recruit by the malady which so prematurely eclipsed his bright genius.

" Before this reaches you, you will be restored, I trust, to your people ; for truly I am very anxious for the religious situation of Boston, deprived, as it now is in three societies, of regular pastors. I am sometimes ashamed of myself, when I think that I am here in Paris in perfect idleness, while you are sinking under the labors of your ministry. But God grant that we may be able to congratulate each other next summer, upon meeting, as I hope we shall, in

health, and taught by our sufferings to cherish more carefully than ever this inestimable gift of our Maker, and not to draw upon it too fast, so that we may use it longer and more sacredly in the service of our people and for the interests of truth. Farewell, my dear friend! I pray that I may soon hear of your perfect recovery. Remember my dear people as often as you can.

"Your friend and brother,

"J. S. B."

For Mr. Samuel C. Thacher, too, — who studied divinity under his care, and who became the beloved minister of the New South church, when Dr. Kirkland was called to the station that, after 1810, he filled with so much honor to himself and to the institution, of the presidency of Harvard University, — he cherished the warmest esteem, to which Mr. Thacher responded by most reverent love.

"The many admirable principles I have heard from you," writes his young friend, "I shall endeavour always to recollect, and it shall be my prayer to the Giver of all good, that I may not be unworthy the regard of the virtuous and wise. Remember me with much love to your brother, and believe me, my dear Sir, with all possible gratitude and affection, your friend.

"S. C. T."

On the occasion of this young brother's settlement, — whose opening talents and virtues Mr. Channing watched with the most tender interest, by whose example he felt himself animated, and to whom he was constantly more and more closely bound by harmony in views and spiritual sympathy, — he entered the following reflections in his journal: —

"1811, May 16. This week is peculiarly eventful and interesting. Yesterday I assisted at the ordination of my friend S. C. Thacher. I presented him the right hand of fellowship. This event should recall to me the day when I devoted myself to the Christian ministry. Have I been a faithful, diligent minister, inquiring for every means of doing good to my people, and devoted most sincerely to their improvement? Let me be quickened by this event, which has connected with me a young man whom I esteem and love. Let me confer with him on the means of benefiting our societies. Let me save him, if possible, from my errors. Let me avoid every feeling of rivalship. Merciful God, render him a better man and Christian than myself. Have I made sufficient sacrifices to the young men who have studied with me? Have I paid attentions, instead of expecting them? Let me endeavour to excite my young brother to great fervor and activity, and let me catch the same warmth from him. I fear, I feel, that I and my brethren are not sufficiently engaged, and not desirous enough to see fruits from our labors. I am not ready to live a suffering life for Jesus Christ. My Saviour! may I think of thy cross, of what thou hast endured for human happiness, and may I count it my highest honor to be a partaker of thy sufferings."

And again he thus writes of him to a friend: —

"Heaven can hardly bestow on me a greater blessing than the friendship of Thacher. The purity of his character and life, and his devotion to his profession, render him peculiarly important to us at this time."

Thus cordial, honorable, mutually beneficial, and every way manly, were the relations between these friends, and a large circle of their brethren. But the days of one of the noblest of them were numbered. On the 9th

of June, 1812, the sad tidings of the death of Buckminster threw the whole community into grief. How deeply Mr. Channing mourned with others the destruction of the hopes which clustered round this gifted and accomplished man appears from many of his papers of that period. He was himself absent at the time from home ; but when he came back, he preached by request a funeral sermon before the Brattle Street Society, and to his own people spoke as follows : —

" On returning to this place, I am not permitted to see and embrace a Christian brother, a fellow-laborer in the gospel, whom I left in the midst of usefulness, — one of the brightest ornaments of his profession, and of this country, — whose vigor of mind, whose eloquence, whose piety, whose sincere devotion to the interests of Christianity, I have witnessed with increasing pleasure and increasing hope. But God, who imparted to this highly favored servant such unusual gifts, who kindled this superior intellect, has suddenly removed him from his wide sphere of honor and usefulness. That you followed to the tomb this righteous man with serious thought and sorrowful reflection I cannot doubt. My own heart sunk within me, when I heard the painful tidings of his death. I felt for the loss I had experienced as an individual ; but this sorrow was faint, compared with my painful sense of the heavy loss which our churches had experienced."

And in a letter he thus expresses himself : —

" Buckminster's death gives me many painful and solicitous feelings in relation to the interests of religion in this place. People here, as you well know, are attached to religious institutions not so much by a sense of the value of religion as by their love to their minister ; and I fear that their zeal will grow cold, when their ministers are removed.

I wish that there were more attachment to the truth, and less to the man who delivers it. The loss of Mr. Buckminster appears to me irreparable. I know no man who unites so many gifts from nature, so many acquisitions from study, and such power of rendering religion interesting to all classes of society, especially to the improved, the polished, the fashionable."

As a last act of honor to this already celebrated preacher, he, with Mr. S. C. Thacher, Mr. Buckminster's more particular friend, was requested to select and prepare a portion of his sermons for the press.

"Mr. Buckminster's papers," writes Mr. George Ticknor, "came into my hands after his death, so that I had a good deal to do with this publication, — a circumstance which I mention as accounting for my knowledge of the facts in relation to it. Mr. Channing undertook it, I think, with interest and pleasure, and gave a good deal of time to it; though of course the labor and responsibility came chiefly on Mr. Thacher. The three sermons on Faith, and the sermon on Philemon, attracted, I believe, more of his attention than any others. In the last an omission was made at his suggestion; but it may be worth notice in reference to the opinions he afterwards entertained on the subject, that the strong phrases in the discourse that touch slavery did not excite his attention. At least, I am satisfied that he made no remarks about them; and I remember the way in which he went over the whole of the sermon. What most struck me, throughout his examination of the manuscripts, was his interest in Mr. Buckminster's reputation, and his care that justice should be done to it."

The rule by which he was governed in this work was thus once communicated by himself: —

"Will you allow me to suggest a counsel which I give

to those who are publishing posthumous works? It is, to beware of publishing too much. The *best* of a man's writings should be selected with somewhat fastidious criticism for the press; and care should be taken, lest the best be lost and fail of their effect by being surrounded with much that wants interest and will not be read. I proceeded on this principle in selecting Mr. Buckminster's sermons, and I think their great success is in part owing to it."

But besides these friends, to whom he was united by the relations of the pastoral office, and the cares and responsibilities, studies and hopes, incident to the ministerial profession, Mr. Channing had others with whom he held intercourse by letter; and some passages, taken from his correspondence at this period, may be of interest as yet further illustrating his character. They will be suitably prefaced by one in which he pleasantly alludes to the stiffness of mental and moral habits contracted by too monotonous an absorption in his own pursuits.

"1812. The great objection I have to writing letters is, that I can hardly do so without beginning to preach. I have composed sermons till I can with difficulty write any thing else. I exhort when I should smile. Not that I think a letter should be written without a desire to do good, but instruction should be delivered with somewhat less formality than from the pulpit. I will try, however, to lay aside my grave countenance sometimes."

"1805. Your books seem to give you an independence on the world which riches never bestowed. I esteem it one of the greatest blessings of my life, that I have been taught to read, and that I am permitted to converse in books with some of the best and greatest of my fellow-beings who have ever existed. If I should be spared to your age, and be

permitted to rest a little while before I go down to the grave, I think this would form my habitual source of comfort and pleasure. With a book in my hand, I should meet the evils of life, and forget its anxious cares. I think we are not sufficiently grateful for the invention of printing. I know not that I ever mentioned it in my prayers, but it has done me more good than food and raiment. I depend on my book as on my daily bread."

"1807. I have very little to say about myself. My health and spirits are tolerably good. Were I allowed to choose, I would ask for ability to apply more to my studies, but I believe that all things are ordered aright. I know already more than I practise myself, and more than I communicate to others. Why, then, should I be so anxious to add to my stock of knowledge? I have a strong propensity to lead the life of a recluse and a bookworm; and perhaps, if I were able to study all the time, I should neglect the active duties of my profession. At present, I am driven from my study every day by the unpleasant sensations which long application produces. With this exception, I am quite well. My life is very tranquil. I *will* not mingle with the contentions of the world. Angry politicians and theologians are raging around me, but I try not to hear; and if this is impossible, I avail myself of my defect of memory, and forget the clamor. Certainly life is too short, its duties too numerous and weighty, to leave us much time to waste in altercation."

"1808. This is my birthday. I have been looking back on the blessings which have filled up my existence. The last year, I find, has been crowned with mercies; and in acknowledging the unmerited goodness of God, I cannot but thank him that he has put it into the heart of so kind a friend to take such an interest in my welfare, and to express toward me so much tenderness and affection. All

my life long, God has been raising up to me benefactors. I never experienced the want of a friendly hand to support me. O that with his blessings he would give me a heart to be grateful for them! Give me your prayers, that the next year of my life may be more useful than the last, that every day may bring me nearer to heaven, that I may feel more of the power of religion, that God would condescend to use even me as an instrument in advancing his cause in the world."

"1809. I feel more and more that I am doing little good, but I blame myself as much as others. Since you have been absent, I have felt more debilitated than usual. I have not been capable of much mental exertion. How much do I need these rebukes to keep me humble! You know the sin which most easily besets me. I have reason to be grateful for the various methods in which God is teaching me my dependence and imbecility."

"1812. *New Year's day.* The past year has been to us both peculiarly interesting. It has made some important changes in our domestic circles, and it has left, I hope, some salutary impressions on ourselves and our friends. I look back on it with much humiliation. I fear that my sufferings have not refined me as they ought. I am sure that my blessings have not left that tender sense of the Divine goodness which I wish ever to maintain. . . . . My increasing duties require increasing activity, and sometimes they suggest many painful fears and forebodings. Pray for me, that I may be faithful and useful. . . . . .

"I recollect on this day the kindness and affection which you have expressed toward me with so much uniformity and tenderness, since I first knew you. Your friendship I have valued as one of the great blessings of my life, and I hope it will not forsake me in any prosperous or adverse changes which may await me. . . . . .

"I know that I have many friends, — perhaps few are more favored than I. But still I cannot spare you. How much of the happiness, and I may add of the usefulness, of my life do I owe to your tender, unremitting kindness! How often have I been kept from fainting by your cheering voice! Do not say that I am inclined to exaggerate your offices of friendship. I cannot express what I feel. I have often felt that your partiality to me was unmerited, but I am not just enough to wish it diminished. It has become one of my highest earthly blessings. It is one of the few blessings to which I look forward with confidence. I feel that many other friends may fail, but I feel a strange assurance that no changes can sever us from each other. Is it not religion, that indissoluble bond, which unites us ?"

"1808. You will not forget, no, not for a moment, that it is God, the best of beings, the kindest of fathers, who gave you the parent you have lost, and to whom you are indebted for all the kind support, the tender care, the faithful admonitions which you have received from your beloved and revered friend, — that it is he who wounds and corrects you. In the perfection of his character, in the wisdom, rectitude, and mercy of his providence, in the truths and promises of his gospel, in his compassion for the fatherless, you will find, I trust, consolation and support. Do not distrust him, who is love, — who is a father when he rebukes, and who rebukes because he is a father, because he is interested in our welfare, because he sees that we have sins which need correction, because he designs to purify us for his presence in heaven. I know the strength of your feelings. I do not expect that at the first moment of affliction you will be able to fix a steady, unwavering eye on the precious truths of our religion. God, who knows that we are dust, permits us to mourn, and I trust compassionates rather than condemns the mourner who sinks under the first stroke of unexpected

calamity ; — but you will not, I hope, long forget the presence and the righteous will of God. You will open your mind to the supporting views which Christianity affords of the purposes of affliction. With sorrow you will unite patience, confidence, humility, and hope."

"1809. Unless I am deceived, you have much to learn, and perhaps much to suffer, before you will deserve to be called happy. Happiness is the *uniform serenity* of a well-governed mind, of disciplined affections, of a heart steadily devoted to objects which reason and religion recommend. According to my tame imagination, Happiness is a very demure lady,—almost as prim as the wives of the Pilgrims of New England. She smiles, indeed, most benignantly, but very seldom laughs; she may sigh, but seldom sobs; the tear may start into her eye, the tear of gratitude and of sympathy, but it seldom streams down the cheek. Her step is sometimes quickened, but she does not waste her spirits and strength in violent and unnatural efforts. She cultivates judgment more than fancy. She employs imagination, not to dress up airy fictions, not to throw a false, short-lived lustre over the surrounding scenery, but to array in splendor distant objects which reason assures her are most glorious and excellent, but which, from their distance, are apt to fade away before the eye, and to lose their power over the heart. Now I confess that my ideas of happiness and those of my friend —— do not perfectly coincide. Time and affliction, however, will bring them nearer to each other. Perhaps reflection may render affliction less necessary."

"1811. In the beginning of this letter, I have alluded to an affliction which I have been called to sustain. It has pleased God this week to remove from us a friend in whom I have long felt a strong and increasing interest. You undoubtedly heard of her frequently, whilst you lived in this town; but her character, her worth, you probably never knew. It has

been my privilege and happiness, for some time, to enjoy an intimacy with this singular woman, this highly favored child of God. She has been a great sufferer for several years, but she has suffered so meekly and patiently, her character has been so refined and elevated by suffering, she embraced all around her with such a strong and tender affection amidst pains which would have rendered others insensible to all but themselves, she discovered such unabated energy of mind at the moment that her emaciated frame seemed just ready to resign its breath, that I have contemplated her with a delight and admiration which very few of our race have inspired. I have understood that in early life she was the victim of sensibility; and indeed it was easy to see that her feelings tended to excess. But religion, that refining and subduing principle, exerted its kindest influence on her heart. She was called to a struggle peculiarly arduous, but she was conqueror. I cannot mourn for her departure; yet it is a thought which almost saddens me, that I am no more to hear her animated voice, no more to commune with that powerful mind, that warm and pure heart, on this side the grave. But to her pious and virtuous friends she is not lost; there is society in heaven."

"1810. I am not insensible to commendation. I will go farther. There is a commendation which affords me an exquisite satisfaction, — I mean a commendation which flows from an unaffected love of goodness, and from a desire to confirm it. Such commendation confers more honor on those who give than on him who receives it, and shows him that he has a place, not in the admiration of a superficial mind, but in the affections of a good, pure heart. Of this praise I can almost adopt the language of Henry the Fifth, —

'If it be a sin to covet honor,
I am the most offending soul alive.'

But to be 'daubed with undiscerning praise,' to have my frailties forced on my mind by being told that I have none,

to receive a tribute which my heart disclaims, and which fills me with apprehension lest I have been a hypocrite, and have practised concealment more effectually than most of my fellow-beings, — this is indeed painful and humiliating. You will not think that I mean to apply *all* this to *you ;* but in your letter you have 'o'erstepped the bounds' of that discretion which I wish you to observe. You throw your colors on your friends too profusely. Humanity is but another word for imperfection. It is a distempered vision which represents it as faultless. I cannot tell you, my dear friend, how much more I should have been gratified, if you had frankly disclosed to me the observations you must have made on my character, and had set before me the weaknesses, defects, disproportions, blemishes, which must have forced themselves on so discerning an eye."

"1812. I thank them for their good opinion; but to *you* I will say, that I feel almost an insuperable reluctance to visit, and much more to preach, where people have taken it into their heads that they are to see or hear any thing uncommon. In my own breast I carry a conviction which contradicts all such opinions, and renders applause painful and mortifying. The tender affection which you express is indeed delightful, though I feel it is not altogether deserved ; but fame, general notice, is not my right, and I pray God that it may never be my wish or end."

"1810. I would not have you think that any human friendship is of itself sufficient to raise you to the excellence I have fancied. There is another source to which you must repair. It is a most consoling doctrine of our religion, that the Father of Spirits delights to perfect the works which he has made, that he has sent his Son to renew his own image in the human heart, that he inspires the love of virtue, that he hears the aspirations and assists the efforts of every soul which desires to be emancipated from its earthly and selfish propensities. . . . . .

"I am very willing that you should dissent from the opinion I have expressed of Hume. When I reviewed that part of my letter, I feared that I had been declamatory rather than convincing; that I had carried my principle too far. It is a fault which I have often observed in my character, that I am prone to overstate an argument, — to infer too much from my premises, — to exhibit a truth without the necessary limitations. I want to make an impression, and defeat my end by demanding a stronger conviction or a more unqualified assent than I have a right to expect. I need to seek the excellence for which Bishop Butler is so remarkable, — I mean that of being so cautious and modest in his inferences, that his readers not only concede the positions for which he contends, but almost blame him for not demanding more. This habit conciliates great confidence for a writer; and we are naturally impressed with the strength of his cause, when we see him able to support it without straining a single argument, or even carrying it to its fair extent. Some people, rather than lose a good metaphor, or a fine sentence, are often tempted to assert what is not altogether accurate; and they have their reward. They astonish, but do not convince. They strike, but do not keep their hold of the mind. May you and I love *Truth* better than *Rhetoric*."

"1810. If I were to differ from you on the subject of history, it would be in giving a stronger preference to biography than you seem to do. General history, indeed, discovers to us human beings in a great variety of circumstances; but it shows us beings principally of *one class* of character, and it brings them before us in their *maturity*, after their characters are formed.

"History transmits to us almost exclusively those men who have had sway over nations. It shows us the ambition which proposes to itself dominion, in an endless variety of forms, — now plotting in the cabinet, now shedding torrents

of blood in the field of battle. I will not say that there is not much important instruction to be derived from this exhibition of human character; but is it the *most* important to such beings as you and I, who would not receive a crown for a gift, — who fill, from necessity and choice, the humbler walks of life, — whose objects, temptations, hopes, and fears are so very different from those which history unfolds? The page of history is so crowded with heroes and statesmen that it cannot admit people like us, although our dimensions are so very small. It has not a place even in the margin for the minister and the schoolmistress. It is too blood-stained to be the record of those peaceful virtues which as Christians we should seek to infuse into our hearts.

"Again, general history shows us only men in their maturity, after they have come forward on the public stage. It seldom carries us back and shows us by what influences the character which we behold was gradually formed. It presents the full-grown man. I want to see him in his cradle, and trace him thence to his height of glory or his depth of guilt. I want to see him when he is not acting his part, in that common, every-day intercourse which reveals the man as he is. Now biography seems to me to give these advantages. It shows us every form and every stage of character; it shows us excellence which is not the less worthy of admiration because it was not called forth into public life. It makes us the friends, the domestic companions, and the private witnesses of the good man.

"Let me just add, that young minds, unless carefully guarded, often receive injurious impressions from history. They see the ambitious exerting such vast power and enjoying such splendid success, that they are dazzled and overwhelmed; they form false ideas of greatness, become reconciled to wars, and sympathize so strongly with the towering oppressor, that they feel no concern for the nations he desolates."

"1811. I need not introduce the following advice, or labor to secure it a favorable reception, by assuring you of the sincere affection from which it flows. You know that I have felt no common interest in your situation, and I must believe that you will ascribe the admonitions I am to offer to the desire of contributing to your usefulness and happiness. The confidence you have reposed in me encourages and even binds me to speak with frankness. Some of my remarks may appear too minute, but your success depends very much on your attention to little things.

"It is of the first importance, that you impress the people amongst whom you are to live with a conviction of your steadiness and stability of character. I feel no little solicitude on this point. If once you are considered thoughtless, volatile, and injudicious, your prospect of success is gone. Your talents will be of little avail. Parents cannot be blamed for requiring a considerate character in those to whom they commit their children. This impression of steadiness you must make, not only by your unwearied attention in school, but by your deportment and appearance at other seasons. You will be cheerful, but not gay. In your manners you cannot but be easy, but you must avoid every thing which approaches wildness. In your dress you cannot but discover taste; but it will be better to fall below, than to rise above, the common standard of fashion in the place where you live. Do not act from the impulse of the moment; but deliberate before you decide. You know what is meant by the word *judgment*. I hope you will possess it, and I hope you will be thought to possess it. In conversation you will not forget that you are among strangers, and that this situation requires a caution and reserve to which you have never before been called. You must also remember that in a small town it is the fashion to repeat what ought to be forgotten. Let not your spirits run away with you. Be not extravagant in expressing delight and admiration. Do

not aim at shining much. You will be brilliant enough without effort. Seek esteem and confidence rather than admiration. Admirers are not friends; and for one who admires, there are twenty to envy and discover faults. Do not make other people subjects of conversation. You will see and hear much, perhaps, to displease you; but, as you are going to instruct the young, and not to reform the old, you may hold your peace with a safe conscience. Be very cautious in forming intimacies. Your respectability, as well as your happiness, requires that you should attach yourself to persons of improved hearts and understandings, — of solid worth, of acknowledged excellence. Indulge in company with moderation. Learn to be happy in yourself, and at home. Partake sparingly of public amusements, and religiously deny yourself every pleasure inconsistent with the active, faithful discharge of your daily duties. I am very desirous that you should avoid the character of a fashionable woman, and you will remember this character is fixed on a person more easily in a small than in a large town. You know the great circumspection required of a young lady who lives alone, without parent, guardian, or brother. Your occupation will render exercise necessary, perhaps every day. Do not think me too minute, if I advise you to vary your walks, and to walk in retired parts of the town. Here end my prudential rules. You will forgive me when I tell you that I have written to you just as I should to my sisters. You must have learnt not to trust to the candor of the world. Give them, if possible, not one ground for questioning your steadiness of character.

"Now for your school. Endeavour to introduce the most perfect system at the beginning, and be very slow to admit any change which inexperienced people may think very good, unless its utility be obvious. Pay great attention to the order of your school, and to the manners of the children; and when they leave you, see that they retire with

silence and regularity. I need not urge it upon you to unite with this strict discipline great mildness and perfect freedom from passion. I wish that you would introduce some religious exercises. Let the Scriptures be daily read, in a reverential manner, by yourself or by some good reader in the school. Be careful to teach every branch thoroughly. A school is lost when it gets the character of being showy and superficial. Let me conclude with urging you to enter into the spirit of your occupation. Learn to love it. Try to carry into it a little enthusiasm. Let it not be your task, but your delight. Feel that Providence is honoring you in committing to you the charge of immortal minds. Study the characters of your pupils, and the best modes of exciting and improving them. You have heart enough; fix it on this noble object. And now, my dear friend, be of good courage. Bear up, with a calm, steady resolution, under the trials of life. Lift your eyes, with gratitude and confidence, to your Father in heaven, and he will never forsake you. Wherever you go, you will be surrounded with his presence; and if you approve yourself his humble, faithful child, you cannot but be happy. To his providence I commend you."

Thus warm were Mr. Channing's sympathies, in the home circle, in his congregation, towards his brethren in the ministry, and to many friends. They were not limited, however, to these spheres, but widened to embrace the wants of all his fellow-men in the community in which he dwelt. The poor were especially objects of his regard, many of whom freely visited him; and he had always several destitute families under his care. His liberality, indeed, was so unbounded, that his elder brother once said, — "Really, William should have a guardian; he spends every dollar as soon as he gets it." And so he actually did. With a good salary, he was yet

always poor, — so utter was his dislike to accumulation, and so little anxious was he for the morrow ; but, as he seldom mentioned his deeds of kindness, comparatively few of them are particularly known. Many letters, however, which yet remain, prove how varied, numerous, judicious, and patient were his labors to cheer, encourage, and redeem the unfortunate. And when his own means were exhausted, rich and generous friends in his society made him their almoner. To one of these he writes, — " I shall, indeed, consider it a great blessing to myself, as well as to you, to be able to suggest opportunities of usefulness ; and I shall do this more readily, if you resolve never to oppose your own judgment out of respect to my feelings." And again he says, — " I thank God that he permits me to communicate to you the thanks of the poor and afflicted. . . . . Rejoice that through you praise has ascended to heaven, — joyful praise from the lips of a man just trembling over the grave. I feel myself indebted to you for the benevolence you exercise to others. . . . . May you yet more earnestly espouse the interest of the Redeemer, and imitate his meek and condescending love." Thus was he doubly a benefactor, by presenting to the wealthy opportunities to bestow on the needy the gifts which God had intrusted to their guardianship.

" I never heard him speak of giving pecuniary aid to any one," says one of his sisters ; " but facts speak for themselves. He must have had a thousand dollars to lay out, of which he spent scarcely any thing upon himself, except in case of sickness, or when he had to take a journey. He never had money for any length of time, and I have no doubt that he always disposed of it nearly as fast as he received it. We must believe that he gave

away nearly eight hundred a year, and I have known many times when he had nothing. In all his feelings he was large and noble. I remember, on one occasion, he had attended the funeral of a gentleman of fortune, and afterwards had visited the afflicted family. The widow, wishing to express her gratitude, inclosed him fifty dollars in a note. It was a sore trial to him. He could not bear to wound the feelings of the lady by a refusal; and yet, to accept it was not to be thought of. He returned it, and, I am sure, in doing so, found some way not to pain another by sparing himself. Think, for one moment, that any one could have offered *money* to such a being, as a return for his sympathy; but then it was so kindly meant on her part, that I could not mention it even now, if she had not long been numbered among the dead. She only did not know him. He was as wise, too, as he was generous, and I never saw any one who more truly understood the value of money for the benefit of others, or who cared less for it himself."

One slight anecdote shows his disposition in this respect. As he was taking a journey alone in a chaise, he was induced by the appearance of poverty about a dwelling to stop and inquire after the condition of the inmates. He found a very old couple, helpless and wretched; and after conversing with them some time as to their simple life, he bade them farewell, leaving in their hands his purse. He had ridden some miles before it occurred to him that his horse would suffer, though he might not, from his penniless condition; when, finding himself in the neighbourhod of an acquaintance, he borrowed the necessary sum to carry him on his way.

His journals are interesting here, also, as showing how comprehensive at once and minutely exact was his char-

ity, in devising benefit for the suffering. There are long and full lists of the various classes of the community who needed care or aid, — sketches of their peculiar trials, temptations, and difficulties, — suggestions for public works, benevolent operations, special reforms, — and hints of all kinds as to the duties which society owes to its members. But a few extracts will speak for themselves.

"Things to be done in town. — Comfortable houses to be let cheap for the poor. Innocent and improving amusements. Interesting works to be circulated among them. Associations among mechanics for mutual support if reduced. Complete course of instruction for youth designed for active life. Dr. Lathrop's plan of education. Justices' salaries to be fixed; their fees; small debts; petty suits; oppression of the poor. Taverns; drinking-parties; a work on ardent spirits should be written. Fire-clubs. Apprentice-boys at bad houses; &c."

"Poor-house. — Rooms to be better aired. There should be selection in assigning rooms. Tracts to be circulated there. Let me visit them once a week. They want plain, pious, unambitious, evangelical ministry; they want that gospel which teaches contentment in every state. An association of females to furnish them employments. Neatness should be prescribed. Great regularity in their exercises. Mutual respect required; decency of manners to each other."

"Causes of poverty to be traced. Charity is not enough directed. Intimate acquaintance with poor families. Employment found. Economical improvements. Store-houses. Provisions of wood in large quantities at cheap prices, and so with all necessaries of life; to be bought at cheap seasons, and sold in large quantities. Rumford boilers."

"Excite no feeling of dependence. Stimulate to exertion.

Relief, such as to call out energy, and remove whatever disheartens and disables."

"How much capacity there is in the poorer classes of knowledge and affection! Why is it not developed? Is not the social order bad? Cannot all the capacities of all classes be called forth? Cannot men's motives in pursuing wealth be purified? Cannot a strong conviction be established, that Christ's precepts in the plain sense are the only rule for Christians? Cannot the power of fashion and opinion, except in so far as they may be sanctioned by Christianity, be subverted?"

"Employ religious schoolmistresses in different parts of the town. The children of the poor need special care."

In this project he was at this time much interested, and was instrumental, in connection with others, in establishing primary schools, — being prompted by the considerations, that, by such a provision,

"The parents are relieved from a great burden, especially in the winter; the children are kept for many hours of the day at least out of the streets, where every vice is contracted, and from the crowded, unwholesome rooms, where they too often witness the worst examples; their faculties are in a measure called forth and improved; they acquire some habits of order, application, and industry; are trained to decency of manners, dress, and appearance; become fitted for the business of life, and are instructed in the Scriptures and the duties of morality."

"A bake-house for the poor, established by a fund for their use; an association of the poor, contributing so much a week for a fund to support them in sickness; associations for relief of the sick, old, debtors, and for the employment of those who are without work."

"What can be done to exalt the poor and ignorant from a life of sense to an intellectual, moral, religious life? How

excite an interest in the education of their children? Let me learn to extemporize, that I may administer plain instruction. May not the mind be quickened by interesting the heart in religion? The Divine character, peculiarly as displayed in Christianity, is the great means of exalting human nature. The poor need moral remedies. *Let the poor be my end.*"

"Let each rich family have some poor under their care; especially Christian families. Mention the poor to others. Connect the poor with good families."

"There should be an association to receive prostitutes, when reduced by want and disease, to reform and employ them. A house necessary, and one walled, &c. The object, seclusion, support, and rendering them useful. A strong aversion to licentiousness should be awakened."

"Immigrants. A society of advice. They are subjects of speculation, exposed to unprincipled men. They want direction, friends. Keep them out of the way of designing people. They depend on the wants of landholders, &c."

"Africans. To enable them better to manage the affairs of this life; to acquire support, property; to elevate their desire of pleasure above sense, to social enjoyments and improvement of mind. I wish them to be thinking persons, to act from thought. Their modes of life would vary, if instruction was early given. A school may interest them. Their present evils — dirt, bad air, crowded rooms, and their poverty — originate in thoughtlessness, intemperance, &c. In learning they will find new pleasures, and be less tempted to irregularity. We must give them new tastes. What powers, how much *mind*, how much *heart*, what treasures, are contained in them! Shall all be lost? Awaken a sense of their true dignity and true excellence, and so prevent vain attention to dress, &c. Is it not possible to make a party among them in support of religion? May there not be a line of distinction drawn among them, and a sense of character awakened?"

These extracts from papers and journals, extending through the first years of his ministry, show how early and how earnestly his sympathies went out to his fellow-men of every condition. He seems to have wished — to quote again his diary — "to associate with all classes, to know their wants, and to become acquainted with the world in which I am placed." His longing was for nothing less than humanity made universal. The spirit that dictated his enthusiastic letters from Richmond was working in him still, and prompting him to seek for every practicable mode of redeeming man from the inhuman degradations to which tens of thousands are subject in a society selfish in its principles, laws, customs, maxims, influences, tendencies. He saw that actual life in Christian communities is a hideous mockery of the generally professed discipleship to Him whose last symbolic act was to gird himself with a towel and to wash his disciples' feet, whose test of distinction was, "Let him that would be greatest among you be the servant of all," and who left as his dying legacy the new commandment, "*As* I have loved you, *so* love ye one another."

But these charities within his immediate neighbourhood, extensive as they were, did not exhaust Mr. Channing's interest in his race. In the growing prevalence of order, justice, freedom, over the internal legislation of the nations of Christendom, and of humanity and peace through their diplomatic, commercial, and intellectual intercourse, he saw a providential process, by which the scattered societies of earth are becoming transformed and reunited into the kingdom of heaven, — a slow process indeed to human sight, and one accom-

panied by trial and struggle, but yet a sure one. And thus believing, he thought that a minister of the glad tidings, of universal good-will, was so far from being exempt from the duties of a citizen, that he was, on the contrary, under special obligation to infuse, as he best could, the spirit of love, the hope of a higher future for mankind, the sense of responsibility to a superhuman authority, into the hearts of his fellows, — heated as they were by partisan passions, and turned from their rightful function of mutual beneficence by worldly jealousies.

From early youth he had been, as we have observed, conversant with political movements; he had been bred up in ardent attachment to liberty under constitutional limits; he had shared in the exhilarating anticipations first excited by the French Revolution, and in the revulsion of shame and sorrow produced by its after excesses; he had watched the triumphs of the "armed apostle of democracy," till he had seen him rear his throne of universal empire upon prostrate states, which fell bravely struggling for independent national existence; and now, in common with many of the best and wisest around him, he feared, as an event by no means impossible, that the United States might be needed as an ark for freedom, when the deluge of despotism had overswept Europe. In a word, he was at this time thoroughly in principle and affections a Federalist. Later in life his sentiments and convictions underwent a great change in regard to this tremendous crisis in modern history. But at the period now under consideration he was opposed with his whole soul and strength to "French principles." To him these were identical with atheism, vice, and moral ruin, with licentious self-will in private manners, and despotism alternating with radical lawlessness in gov-

ernment. In their triumph he foresaw, as he thought, the downfall of the cross. Thus judging, how could he do otherwise, as a brave and single-hearted man, than strive to check their growing power ?

Accordingly, in his Fast and Thanksgiving sermons, from which extracts will hereafter be given, he entered freely into the consideration of national dangers and duties, and brought men and measures to the test of the Christian standard. In this course of conduct he had the sanction of such men as Dr. Osgood and Dr. Kirkland ; but many of his brethren condemned him for desecrating the dignity of the pulpit by the introduction of such topics, and large numbers of the laity were indignant at his presumption, as they considered it, and officious intermeddling in matters beyond his sphere. As this was the period of the Embargo and the last war, when commerce was prostrate and industry languished, — when the bond of the Union was almost severed by civil strife, and angry controversies prevailed in public and private, — when family ties and old friendships were rudely broken by political dissensions, — when the circles of social intercourse were limited to those who adopted the same party creeds, and men rose or fell in the scale of esteem as their opinions varied, — when in the theatres the shouts of "*Ça ira*," and "God save the king," alternately drowned each other, — when angry mobs tore unpopular editors from the jails where they were put for safety, — and when, in a word, the nation was convulsed, — it can easily be understood that a preacher who espoused the cause of either of the contending bodies was forced to bear the brunt of severe censure, and to be made the object of exaggerated praise. To Mr. Channing one of these results was as distasteful as the other ; but as

several of his sermons were printed, and thus became widely known, he largely experienced both. Some critics went so far as to ascribe to him no better motive for overstepping the usual lines of pulpit discussion, than that of seeking the notoriety which he thus met; a charge, to be sure, which seemed sufficiently absurd to those who knew the man, and which his friends might have fully answered by stating the facts, that he had declined to deliver the Phi Beta Kappa oration before Harvard University from aversion to appear in public, that he habitually shunned various opportunities for displaying his talents, and held back from even the literary enterprises in which he was well qualified to excel, because he feared lest he might thus be led astray from the more appropriate duties of his profession. But he knew his own heart, and year by year went steadily on his course of giving with perfect frankness such warnings and rebukes as he deemed timely.

In these trials he had in private the faithful counsel of his brother Francis, who was a firm and earnest advocate of the same political views, and in public he received the support of some of the most distinguished of his fellow-citizens; for this was the day when Governor Strong communicated the stern resolution of his character to the councils of the State, when George Cabot with his pen and tongue cast over perplexed subjects the clear light of his sagacious judgment, when Fisher Ames held private circles and public assemblies spellbound by the charm of his rich eloquence, and when Boston and Massachusetts generally were strongly enlisted on the Federal side. His decided action had the effect of adding to his celebrity and influence; and he took at this time in public respect the position which

he held through the rest of life. Thenceforward he was known as a man of unfaltering principle, at once temperate and bold, slow to form opinions, but fearless to maintain them, thoroughly to be depended upon in the most trying scenes, ready to follow through good or ill report his convictions of right, and who always

"walked attended
By a strong-siding champion, Conscience."

Thus passed the first ten years and more of Mr. Channing's ministerial life. They were uneventful, but inwardly rich in results; and many good seeds then planted themselves, which were afterward to bear abundant fruits. Inherited errors, too, not a few, in thought and practice, had been slowly outgrown, — so slowly, that he was perhaps unconscious of the change which had been wrought in his principles. Above all, he had learned the lesson of keeping true to his purest, highest self, or, to express the same fact more humbly and justly, of being obedient to the Divine will, however revealed to his inmost reason. Goodness had firmly enthroned itself as the reigning power in his nature. He lived the life communicated from above. He was becoming yearly and daily more and more a child of God.

From his very entrance on a public career, he produced upon all who came into his presence the impression of matured virtue and wisdom, and inspired reverence though young. He wore an air of dignity and self-command, of pure elevation of purpose, and of calm enthusiasm, that disarmed familiarity. Careful of the rights of others, courteous and gentle, he allowed no intrusions upon himself. He was deaf to flattery, turned at once from any mention of his own services or position,

paid no compliments, and would receive none ; but, by constant reference to high standards of right, transferred the thoughts of those with whom he held intercourse from personal vanity to intrinsic excellence, and from individual claims to universal principles. He gave no time to what was unimportant, made demands upon the intellect and conscience of those he talked with, and inspired them with a sense of the substantial realities of existence. In his treatment of others there was no presumption nor partiality. He was deferential to old and young ; listened without interruption, and with patience, even to the dull and rude ; spoke ill of none, and would hear no ill-speaking ; tolerated no levity, but at once overawed and silenced it by wise and generous suggestions ; was never hasty, rash, nor impetuous in word or act, and met these weaknesses in others with an undisturbed firmness that disarmed passion while rebuking it. Above all, he recognized in his fellows no distinctions but those of character and intelligence, and, quietly disregarding capricious estimates and rules of mere etiquette, met rich and poor, learned and ignorant, upon the broad ground of mutual honor and kindness. Thus his influence was always sacred and sanctifying ; and no better impression can be given of him, as he then appeared, than is presented in his description of the Good Minister, in the sermon — quite famous at the time — which he preached at the ordination of the Rev. John Codman in 1808. Henry Ware, the younger, once said truly, that Mr. Channing had there sketched his own portrait. The passage is as follows, and with it this chapter may most suitably be closed.

" On this occasion, I have thought that it would be useful

to dwell on the importance of a zealous and affectionate performance of ministerial duties. On this subject I could wish to hear rather than to speak. I feel that the place which belongs to me is not that of a confident teacher, but of an humble, self-accusing learner. When I look round on my fathers and brethren in the ministry, whose years and experience and improvements in piety peculiarly fit them for this theme, I feel no faint desire to resign to them the office I am expected to perform. But my feelings and wishes have been overruled; and now that I must speak, I wish to suggest something which will tend to quicken my own heart, which will stir up the minds of my brethren, and which will impress this numerous assembly with the duties and objects, the tremendous responsibility, and the infinitely solemn consequences of the sacred ministry.

"It is the exhortation of Paul to Timothy, 'Be instant in season, out of season'; that is, 'Be urgent, engaged, in earnest, not only at stated seasons of instruction, not only when thine own ease and convenience may permit, but at every season when thou canst hope that truth may be imparted, or serious impressions be produced.' These words furnish us with this practical doctrine, that a minister of Jesus Christ should be distinguished by zeal, earnestness, and affection in the discharge of his sacred office. In the present discourse, I propose to offer a few remarks on the duty enjoined in the text, and then to present considerations suited to enforce it on our consciences and hearts.

"To be instant in season and out of season is to be cordially devoted to the great object of the Christian ministry. It is to exert on this object the strength of our affections, to make it the centre of our thoughts, and the great end of our labors. In this zeal and earnestness it is implied that our work is our happiness; that we do not make our ministry a means to some further, selfish end; that we do not enter on it from love of ease, or distinction, or gain; but that it is

itself our choice, and that we cling to it with an affection which overpowers all private considerations. It is implied that we oversee the flock of God, not from constraint, but willingly, — not for filthy lucre, but from a ready mind; that the love of Christ bears us away, and that from this love we desire to feed his sheep.

"To be instant in season and out of season is to be carried by affection to habitual, continued efforts for human salvation. It is not to make a few convulsive efforts when our feelings are accidentally warmed, and then to settle down into supineness and sloth. It is not to confine ourselves to a cold, mechanical round of what we call our duties, and to feel that we have done enough when we have done what is claimed and expected. It is to glow with a desire of success, to stand watching opportunities of doing good to the souls of men. It is to think that we have done nothing, whilst multitudes within our reach are perishing in their sins. It is to think no labor difficult, no sacrifice great, by which men may be saved. It is to explore new means of usefulness; to inquire what peculiar forms of Christian exertion our peculiar conditions and relations may admit; and then to follow with resolute purpose and strenuous effort the plans which approve themselves to our serious judgment. Perhaps there is no profession, no occupation, which encourages so much musing as the profession of a minister. It is very easy and very pleasing to mark out paths of usefulness, to set at work in our imaginations a variety of means from which the happiest effects are to flow. But to *do* as well as to *will*, this is the toil. To be instant in season and out of season implies that we carry deliberation into practice; that we convert possible into real good; that no discouragements have power to shake those purposes which we deliberately approve; that we wait not to consult ease or opinion, when we have already consulted God and our own consciences; that we press forward in the path of

duty, undismayed by the opposition, unabashed by the ridicule, of the world.

"This zeal and earnestness ought to pervade our whole ministerial duties. We should carry it into our *private* studies and devotions. A minister can impart to his people only what he has himself received. His own understanding must be first enlightened, his own heart first kindled, before he can communicate a rational and fervent piety. Hence a minister should apply with zeal to the various means of personal improvement. He should never be contented with his present attainments, never imagine that he has learned all which God has revealed, never say that he has formed his system, and has nothing to do but to preach it. Divine truth is infinite and can never be exhausted. The wisest of us are but children; our views are very dim and narrow; and even where we discern the truth, how faint is its practical impression! Every minister, I think, who studies the Scriptures with a simple heart, must feel that there is much to be corrected in his views of religion. From the difficulty which he finds in making all Scripture easily and naturally harmonize with his own sentiments, or with any other system, he must infer, that, even where the truth is held in the greatest purity, it is still blended with not a little error. This conviction, united with a consideration of the influence which he necessarily exerts over the minds of others, should lead him to his Bible with almost trembling solicitude. He ought to bend on it the whole powers of his mind, that he may attain enlarged and consistent conceptions of the Divine character and will. He ought, in his studies, habitually to exert a watchfulness over his mind, lest some unworthy feeling, some narrow interest, some prejudice of education, some attachment to a party, secretly insinuate itself, and incline him to one view of religion rather than another. He ought to unite fervency of prayer with earnestness and freedom of inquiry, and, distrusting himself, seek

the better guidance of the Father of Lights and the Spirit of Truth.

"But a minister must not only be earnest in his private studies; he must be urgent and alive in his *public* duties. From his retirement he should bring into the sanctuary a heart glowing with Christian affections. His prayers should discover a mind familiar with God, accustomed to the mercy-seat, elevated by habitual devotion, and breathing without effort the pure and humble desires of a Christian. In preaching, his heart should disclose itself in his sentiments, manner, and style. Whilst unfolding the Divine perfections, he should let men see that they are perfections he himself loves and adores. In enjoining a Christian temper, he should urge it as one who has felt its beauty and power. When describing the promises of the gospel, he should speak with the animation of a holy hope. Whilst directing men to the cross, he should speak as one who has prostrated himself at its foot. This is pulpit eloquence. He should let men see that he has come, not to dazzle them with the studied ornaments of rhetoric, not to play before them the tricks of an orator, but to fix their solicitous attention on the concerns of eternity, to persuade them to be reconciled to God, and to incite them to universal obedience. Let me here mention, that it is highly important that his *manner* be earnest. By this I do not mean a noisy, tumultuous manner. I do not mean, that a minister must have lungs of iron and a voice of thunder. Noise and earnestness are very different things. I only mean, that the minister should deliver his message as if he felt its infinite weight, as if his whole soul were interested in its success; and this he may do without being a brawler. In the still, small voice we may discern the language of the heart. I repeat it, this expression of the heart is the perfection of ministerial eloquence. Rules are very useful to teach us what to avoid. But when rules have done all that they can

for us, they will leave us chilling preachers, unless we superadd that tenderness and earnestness which an engaged heart can alone breathe through our delivery. May I be permitted to mention the want of this earnestness as a prevalent defect at the present day? My brethren, should not our sleeping hearers, and the faint effects of our ministry, lead us to inquire, whether we present religious truth in the most impressive form? Is it asked, how this coldness of manner is to be remedied? Let us not, for this end, mimic feelings we do not possess. Let us rather, before we preach, possess our souls with the importance of the truth we are to deliver. Let us make our discourses truly our own, by catching first ourselves the impressions we wish to make on others. Whilst preaching, let the presence of the Divine Majesty frequently recur to us, that it may extinguish our fear of man, and excite an animating confidence in the blessing of God. Were these our habits, should we not be more interesting preachers?

"But further, the zeal of the minister of Christ should extend beyond the sanctuary. He should carry into his common walks and conversations a mind bent on his great end, and ever ready to seize an opportunity of impressing men with religion. He should particularly labor in his own life, in his own familiar intercourse, to exhibit a uniform and interesting example of the truth he preaches. He should not only be solicitous to preach, but still more to live, Christianity. That minister is not instant in season and out of season, who has learned to excite in himself some momentary feelings, and to employ words and tears of entreaty, whilst in the pulpit; but who comes into the world ready to sympathize with its evil feelings, and to comply like a slave with its tyrannical requisitions.

"Such is Christian zeal. I need not mention that this zeal cannot be maintained without great attention to the government of our desires and passions. The mind and

heart can never act vigorously on religion, whilst fettered and benumbed by any sensual lust, by avarice or ambition. Would we attain the bold and persevering zeal enjoined by the apostle? We must keep under the body; we must partake with rigid temperance of animal pleasure; we must look with holy indifference on worldly wealth and honor; and thus preserve unwasted the energy of our souls, that we may consecrate it to the work which we have voluntarily assumed.

"This genuine Christian earnestness is too rarely seen. Ministers and private Christians are, indeed, very often in earnest; but their zeal is not seldom an unhallowed, destructive fire, kindled at any altar rather than that of God. There are some whose zeal is madness, who place religion in the fervors and ecstasies of a disordered mind, and who shatter their own and others' understandings in a whirlwind of sound. There are some whose zeal is partial; they spend it all on forms and opinions, which, though not unimportant, are not the essentials of Christianity. They compass sea and land, not to make followers of Christ, but converts to their sect. They overlook the heart, that they may rectify the head; and make Christianity, not a vital, inward, efficient principle, expressed in increasing conformity to Jesus Christ, but a dry, cold, barren system of modes and speculations. There are some who are earnest enough, but their earnestness is passionate and irritable. They cannot bear contradiction. They do not address serious argument to the erroneous, and affectionate persuasion to the sinful, but express their zeal in clamor, abuse, hard names, and all the varieties of persecution which their situation places within their reach. There is also a zeal which is the base-born progeny of pride and ambition. It is ever busy and active, for it loves to be seen and heard, and to acquire influence in the church. It is greedy of services which draw attention, and seeks to heighten itself by cast-

ing severe reflections on the lukewarmness of others. Remote from all these is true Christian zeal. True zeal is enlightened and judicious, meek and gentle; sensible of its own infirmities, and therefore ready to bear long with others; not devoted to a party, but to the wide interests of Christian piety; not anxious for elevation, but willing to be eclipsed and thrown far behind by the more splendid and useful exertions of others for the common cause of Christianity. So single, disinterested, and fervent is the zeal which the gospel requires of its ministers."

CHAPTER II.

SPIRITUAL GROWTH.

ÆT. 23–34. 1803–1814.

We have followed Mr. Channing through the first ten years of his ministry, and have seen how the living temple was built up within him, — from the holy of holies, where Divine Love shone on the tabernacle of conscience, to the outer courts in which even worldly interests were taught to bow before the presence of the All Good. In his hours of prayer and study truthful earnestness had ministered at the altar, and in the circles of home and society kindly affections had come up in tribes to worship. His profound experience verified the words, —

> "God many a spiritual house hath reared, but never one
> Where lowliness was not laid first, the corner-stone."

He had entered upon the pastoral office with many doubts and fears, humbled by conscious unworthiness, subdued beneath a sense of the stern realities of earthly discipline, and intent with all his moral energy to lead the heavenly life. His enthusiasm had been concentrated in a solemn purpose of perfect fidelity, and the force of his intellect absorbed in solving the problems of man's degeneracy, and his restoration to dignity and freedom. The feeling, that he had assumed the most responsible of human functions, in the performance of whose duties he could not but affect a large number of fellow-beings

by the contagion of his inward maladies or the refreshment of his health, had made him severely scrupulous. And through every act, in all relations, he had offered the petition, —

> "Lord! place me in thy concert, give one strain
> To my poor reed."

His earliest preaching was pathetic, perhaps even sad, in tone. It was full of aspirations after the peace of a will made one with the will of God, and of strict demands for the purest self-denial. But gradually, as he was prepared, the beauty and blessedness of Divine communion streamed in upon his wakeful heart, like the glow of dawn through eastern windows.

This spiritual development we have now to trace, and extracts from his sermons will afford us the surest guidance. His discourses, indeed, were his best diary. Their topics and the treatment of them were transcribed from the records in his heart; and his reproofs and appeals to his people were but the outward symbol of his own private struggles. In making these extracts, the rule has been kept of selecting such passages as were apparently of most interest to him at the time when they were written, and which are proved to have been the native growth of his mind by containing the views most fully and frequently unfolded by him in later years.

The attentive reader can hardly fail to be impressed with the manifestation of moral and mental *unity* given in these papers. Through modes of thought and expression merely adventitious, a few grand ideas are put forth, at first feeble, but slowly expanding until they absorb into their strong trunks and wide-spread boughs the whole vigor of his life. In sentiment and style, these sermons are original, in the sense that they were not de-

rived from the atmosphere of the surrounding community, or from the leading minds with which Mr. Channing held intercourse. Indeed, there was little resembling them in the preaching at that time prevalent in Boston or New England. They express his deepest consciousness, his intuitions of spiritual realities, his testimony from experience to Providential guardianship, hopes which were gathered from his own devotedness, encouragements which were justified by humble yet glad remembrances of his own success. In the strongest sense of the word, these writings are genuine, and thus truly indicate their author's genius. The unity of his nature yet further appears in the mutual connection which runs through his doctrines. Each part coheres with the whole ; one life organizes them. And finally, his integrity is shown in the steadiness with which he pursued through the remainder of life the avenues of thought thus early opened. From the outset of his course, he was earnestly resolved to be what God designed him for, and to fulfil the special end for which he came. But while original, he was far from being eccentric. He felt no desire to push his views to their extremes, no passion for system-making prompted him, no unqualified statements were hazarded, no extravagant zeal led to reckless positiveness, and imagination threw around his path no delusive glare ; but good sense and modesty made him always moderate and mindful of due limits. Again, while true to himself, he was not isolated in his intellectual aims. On the contrary, his mind was open to the full influences of the age, and his heart beat responsively to the great impulses and longings with which humanity throughout Christendom was then instinct. The chief value, indeed, of these writings is to be found in the fact, that they are the answers of a sin-

cere seeker to the questions which all the leading minds of the time were discussing throughout Europe. They are the observations of a patient student of the skies on this side of the ocean, and so may serve to determine by parallax the orbit of the truths whose light was then just discerned in the firmament.

In the very first sermon which Mr. Channing wrote, he showed the singular consistency of his inward nature by thus expressing the essential principle of all his after thoughts and teachings: — "The end of life, God's one grand purpose, is, to prepare mankind for the holiness and blessedness of heaven by forming them to moral excellence on earth. Redemption is the recovery of man from sin, as the preparation for glory. And all Christian morals may be reduced to the one principle, and declared in the one word, LOVE. God is love; Christ is love; the gospel is an exhibition of love; its aim is to transform our whole spirits into love. The perfection of the Divine system is revealed in the mutual dependencies which unite all creatures. All lean upon one another, and give while they receive support. No man is unnecessary; no man stands alone. God has brought us thus near to each other, that his goodness may be reflected from heart to heart. Holiness is light. We glorify God when by imitation we display his character. The good man manifests the beauty of God." Thus he struck the key-note of the symphony, in the evolving of whose melodious strains his whole life was to be passed.

The order adopted in arranging the following extracts is the one chosen by himself for the work which he was engaged in writing at the time of his death, and of which a full notice will be hereafter given. As it was his pur-

pose, in that book, to sum up the results of his inquiries, and to justify his leading views, its general divisions will safely direct us in attempting to trace his upward path.

SECTION FIRST.

RELIGION.

1811. God our father. "When we conceive of God as a pure Spirit, and dwell on his incommunicable perfections, of which we see no image or resemblance in any beings around us, he eludes the feeble vision of our minds. It is then almost impossible that the affections can be excited and centred upon him. Such views of God furnish us no object on which we can rest, as on a reality. Now the Scriptures invest this pure and infinite Spirit with a character, relations, and qualities which we can comprehend, — such as are continually displayed around us, such as constantly address and touch our hearts, such as we can revolve in thought and meditate upon with ease and delight, such as are attractive and promise happiness; and thus they furnish us the best and most effectual means for exciting and cherishing the love of God. Of all the interesting characters and relations in which the Scriptures, especially the books of the New Testament, exhibit the Supreme Being, that of *Father* is the most common, prominent, striking. . . . . .

"No character could bring God so nigh as this of *the Father*. There is no relation which we know so familiarly as the parental. What name recalls so many thoughts and feelings, so many favors and tender remembrances, as that of parent? The Scriptures, then, in giving this view of God, place him before us in a clear, intelligible light. We are not called to dwell on perfections which are utterly incomprehensible, the names of which are sounds in the ear, but excite no ideas in the mind, and which have no tendency to interest the heart. God is our Father. . . . . .

"I fear it has been the influence of many speculations of ingenious men on the Divine character to divest God of that paternal tenderness which is of all views most suited to touch the heart. I fear we have learnt insensibly to view him as possessing only a general benevolence, which he extends over his wide creation, a benevolence neither very strong nor ardent, not descending to individuals, and not essential to the felicity of the Divine nature. Now this distant and almost indifferent benevolence will hardly seize on our affections. It may please us in moments of calm speculation. It will not inspire a love strong enough to curb our passions, to compose our sorrows, to influence our lives. For these ends, we need to have other views frequently suggested to us, — those views of God's affection for us and for his wide family, which his parental relation to us suggests, and which the kindness of his providence compels us to receive.

"Let me now ask, why these views of God may not be cherished, and why we may not suppose that God has properly the feelings of a father towards us. It is objected, that the supposition implies that God is not infinitely happy in himself, but derives happiness from his creatures; and this derivation, we are told, is dishonorable to God. But I do not perceive that we dishonor God by believing that his creation is a real source of felicity to him, that he finds a real happiness in doing good, and in viewing with complacence obedient, virtuous, and happy children. To me there is no view of God more honorable than this. Is it not the character of a perfect man, that the happiness of others is his own, that he knows no higher joy than to confer and to witness felicity, that his heart responds to the feelings of those around him? And if this is perfection in man, can it be an imperfection in God? Do we, indeed, exalt God, when we represent him as unaffected by the state of his creatures? Next to ascribing malignity to him, what can we say worse

of him than this, — that he looks on the joys and sorrows of his own creatures without joy and without pity? . . . . .

"We cannot see much to envy in the felicity of a being who has no feeling of interest and love extending beyond himself. Deprive God of the happiness of love, and we deprive him of that enjoyment which we have every reason to believe the purest and most inexhaustible in the universe."

1805. Love the principle of harmony in the universe. "The Christian possesses a great advantage in the contemplation of nature. He beholds *unity* in the midst of *variety*. He looks round on the changing scenery, and in every leaf of the forest, every blade of grass, every hill, every valley, and every cloud of heaven, he discovers the traces of Divine benevolence. Creation is but a field spread before him for an infinitely varied display of *love*. This is the harmonizing principle which reduces to unity and simplicity the vast diversity of nature, — this is the perfection of the universe. It clothes in moral glory every object we contemplate. The Christian truly may be said to hear the music of the spheres. He hears suns and planets joining their melody in praise to their benignant Creator. His ear, and his alone, is tuned to this heavenly harmony. His soul is love."

1811. The mercy and justice of God. "Mercy is an essential attribute of God, not an affection produced in him by a foreign cause. His blessings are free, and bestowed from a real interest in his creatures, — not purchased from him, and bestowed by another on those whose welfare he disregards. He really loves mankind; and this is the great motive, first cause, and highest spring of their redemption. Thus I have endeavoured to place before you Divine goodness in the glory in which it shines in Scripture.

"But I must not stop here. This doctrine, whilst ob-

scured by some, is carried to excess by others. There are those who, when they hear of the essential and infinite mercy of God towards even the sinful, imagine that God has no aversion towards sin, and cannot punish. Unhappily the minds of men are prone to run to extremes. They cannot be driven from one sentiment without vibrating to its opposite. Some men, as we have seen, array the Divinity in darkness and terror. God, according to them, is so holy, that he looks on sinners with no feelings but indignation. His anger burns; his sword is unsheathed; it falls more rapidly than the lightning; and nothing saves us from its sharp destruction but the merciful Son, who interposes between us and the descending ruin, receives it into his own breast, and thus appeases the wrathful Deity. When these representations are opposed as inconsistent with the character of Him whose name is Love, who created and who preserves us, the mind is then prone to reject all its former conceptions, and to form a deity altogether insensible to the distinction between good and evil, between holiness and sin, — incapable of feeling displeasure or of inflicting punishment.

"But the Scriptures forbid us to cherish these partial and mutilated views of the Divine character. They teach his essential, self-moved mercy; and this most affecting view of God I would always hold up to you, that you may love him with your whole hearts. Happy should I be, were I permitted to make them my only theme. Happy, indeed, could I hope that no other motive is needed than this, — that the goodness of God, whenever enforced, excites, in all who hear, the sentiments of gratitude, and the purpose of obedience. But there is reason to fear that some minds are so fallen, that this very doctrine which imposes such obligation is abused to licentiousness, and employed to produce the feeling of security in a sinful course. There are some who think, if they do not say, that, since God is so good, his laws may be broken with impunity. To guard against such a

perversion of the doctrine I have enforced, let me repeat that his mercy is not an undistinguishing fondness; that whilst he compassionates the offending, and has appointed methods for their reformation and forgiveness, he is unchangeably the enemy of sin; that his very character, as the universal Father, requires him to punish and humble the disobedient, selfish, unjust, proud, and impure, to redress every principle and practice opposed to the order and happiness and perfection of his creatures."

1811. Regeneration. "Is man a Christian by his first birth, or do his early propensities impel him to the cultivation of Christian virtues in proportion as they are known? Do sensual and earthly desires hear the voice of conscience, shrink at once within the limits which reason assigns, and leave the throne of the heart to the Creator? How many desires and habits which conscience forbids are indulged! How many deviations from the path of God's commands are registered in the memory of every man who practises the duty of self-recollection! A religious character, then, is an acquisition, and implies a change; a change which requires labor and prayer, which requires aid and strength from heaven; a change so great and important, that it deserves to be called a *new birth.* The Christian is a new man. Once the dictates of conscience might have been heard; now they are obeyed. Once an occasional gratitude might have shed a transient glow through his heart; now the Divine goodness is a cherished thought, and he labors to requite it by an obedient life. Once his passions were his lords; now he bows to the authority, and waits to hear the will, of God. Once human opinion was his guide, and human favor the reward he proposed; now he feels that another eye is upon him, that his heart and life are naked before God, and to approve himself to this righteous and unerring witness and judge is his highest ambition.

Once he was ready to repine and despond when his wishes and labors were crossed; now he sees a providence in life's vicissitudes, the discipline of a father in his sufferings, and bears his burdens, and performs his duties, with cheerful resignation to Him who assigns them. Once he was sufficiently satisfied with himself, or unwilling to feel his deficiencies; now he is humble, conscious of having sinned, desirous to discover his errors, contrite in his acknowledgments, earnest in his application to Divine mercy, and resolute in his opposition to temptation. Once the thought of a Saviour suffering for human pardon, and rising from the dead to confer immortality, excited little interest; now the promises, love, cross, and resurrection of Jesus come home to him with power, and awaken gratitude and hope. Once he lived chiefly for himself; now he has learnt to love his fellow-beings with a sincere and an efficient kindness, to lose sight of himself in the prosecution of benevolent designs, to feel for the misery, for the sins, of those around him, and to endure labors and sacrifices, that he may give relief to the frail body, and peace and health to the immortal mind. To conclude, — once he was alive to injury, and suffered anger and revenge to direct his treatment of an enemy; now his indignation is tempered by mercy, and he is ready to forgive.

"From this brief sketch, from this comparison of the Christian character with that to which our nature is so prone, do we not see that a great change is required to make men Christians? I do not say that the same change is required in all. I do not say that education has no influence. I do not say, that Christianity, now that it is so widely diffused, and so early enforced on the mind, may not check many passions before they have grown up into habits. But after all the benefits of discipline, we see our nature still weak, erring, yielding to temptation, negligent of known duty. Still, to be Christians, all have much to put off, to

subdue, to correct, to renounce; and all have much to put on, to acquire, to cherish. So that the Christian character may still be called a second birth. The best Christians can ordinarily look back to the period, when they were governed by inferior and unworthy principles; when the world was more powerful than conscience and God, or at least when the sense of duty was comparatively faint and uninfluential. By the precepts, doctrines, motives, promises of Christianity, and by the secret influences of God's spirit on the heart, they have been raised to a faith, hope, and love which may be called a new life. They have been born again. . . . . .

"The fact is, there is a general resemblance between birth and the production of the Christian character. By both, a being is brought into a new state, and a most interesting change is produced in his conduct. Here, indeed, the analogy stops. The difference between the two changes which are here compared proves that the mode and circumstances of their production must be very different. Scripture and experience lead us to believe that the change which makes a man a Christian is *gradual*, *progressive*. The Scriptures are very far from speaking of regeneration and conversion in the language of human systems, as effects which take place in a moment. On the contrary, regeneration and conversion are spoken of as if they were taking place through the whole of life. The Christian is continually experiencing the change which is expressed by these and similar terms. . . . . .

"I consider that experience as well as Scripture proves the gradual production of the change of heart, or the new birth. Our observation will teach us that great changes are not often suddenly produced in the human character. There are, indeed, instances of men who are suddenly stopped in a career of sin, and seem almost in a moment to turn back and retrace their steps. But religion is generally

introduced and formed in us by a gentler operation. Where religious instruction has been given in early years, there is always some conviction of duty to God, some sensibility to sin, some uneasiness at neglect of religion, some vague purpose of improvement. This seems to be the first stage of the religious character; and some never pass beyond this, beyond a feeble and deceitful purpose of being better. Others, as they advance, have their attention in various methods drawn to religion and a future life. Perhaps some gross sin, into which they are hurried, startles their consciences, and forces on them the thought of their exposure to God's dreadful displeasure. Perhaps some religious companion, or good example, wins their affections, impresses them with the loveliness and importance of Christian virtue, and shows them by contrast their own miserable deficiency. Perhaps some affliction throws a gloom over the present state, leads them to consider the emptiness of the world and the need of Divine support, and directs their dejected minds to that gospel which is the only comforter of human woe. Perhaps sudden, unexpected blessings recall powerfully to them their heavenly Benefactor, and fasten on them a painful sense of their ingratitude. Perhaps an alarming providence, dangerous sickness, the near approach of death, appalls, compels them to look into eternity, and to feel the necessity of preparation for another life. Perhaps a serious discourse arrests their thoughts, and convinces them that the concerns of their souls are too weighty to be trifled with. By these and other means, their attention is awakened to religion. Attention produces solicitude; for none can think seriously on the subject without feeling that they have sins to be forsaken, to be forgiven. This solicitude produces prayer; and prayer obtains the aid and influence of our merciful Father in heaven. The Scriptures are read with new seriousness, interest, self-application. The mediation and promises of Jesus Christ are embraced with new grati-

tude and hope. His example appears more amiable, excellent, worthy of imitation and obedience; gross sins are forsaken; irregular desires are checked; gradually the deliberate purpose is formed of following him; and at length this becomes the strongest and most settled purpose of the soul.

"This may be considered as an outline of the general method of regeneration. I am sensible that there is a great variety in the paths by which men are brought to God. No two minds resemble each other in all their feelings. The religious history of every man is in some measure his own, peculiar to himself. The experience of each is influenced by his education, his companions, the kind of instruction he hears, and by his natural temperament. The timid mind is awakened by the terrors of the Lord; the tender and affectionate is drawn by his mercies. But amidst this great variety, the multitude of Christians agree in this, that they can point to no particular moment when a change was wrought in their hearts. Their religion has grown up by degrees, very often as silently and imperceptibly as the tree — to which it is compared — sends forth its roots and branches."

1810. Love of God. "The love of God which the Scriptures call us to cherish, and which we are formed to attain and enjoy, is not a blind, irrational sentiment. It is founded on the clearest views of the understanding, on the abundant evidence we possess, that there is an Infinite Being, in whom reside wisdom, and power, and goodness, without beginning, or end, or any limit; who sustains to us the near and tender relation of Creator, Father, Benefactor, and Lord; whose commands are equitable and kind; and who is willing to pardon our offences on the terms of repentance. It is the offering of the heart to this best of beings; it venerates his majesty, esteems and adores his

excellence, is grateful for his goodness, rejoices in his felicity and in the felicity of his creation, implores his forgiveness, resigns itself to his providence, and desires to do his will ; and is this an affection to be decried and renounced ? In the love of God are united the most delightful affections we exercise towards our fellow-beings, — filial love, thankfulness to benefactors, reverence for the great and good, sympathy with the happy, and universal goodwill. These pure affections all meet in the love of God ; and are refined, exalted, and rendered sources of inconceivably high delight, in consequence of the infinite amiableness and superiority of the Being whom we love.

" Do not confound this love with the ravings of enthusiasm. It is a calm, mild, reverential sentiment, improving the understanding, subduing the passions, giving serenity to affliction, and uniformity to the whole character and life. Do not confound it with a morose, churlish, and censorious bigotry. It is a happy, cheerful principle ; accepting blessings with a gratitude which improves them, delighting in all God's works, and seeing him in all, rejoicing in his providence, and hoping immortality from his mercy, regarding all men as his children, and discerning with pleasure all the excellences with which he has endowed them. Can that heart be gloomy, which adores and loves the infinitely wise and merciful God, and views him as a father, — which associates him with all its joys and pains, with all the works of nature, and all the changes of life, — which feels him near in danger and in death, and which hopes from his mercy a blessed immortality ? No ! It is not the love of God which sheds gloom and despair, but a very different principle. True love of God illuminates the darkness of the present life, and is a foretaste of the felicity of heaven."

1808. The happiness of being loved by God. " In considering the great happiness of possessing the Divine fa-

vor, I first observe, that they who love God must derive an inexpressible joy from the mere consciousness that they are beloved by such a Being, without regard to the benefits which flow from this favor.

"The Christian views God as the best, the most lovely, the most venerable of all beings. He sees, that to this glorious Being he and all things owe their existence; that the universe is full of God; and that all happiness, from the rapture of archangels down to the faintest pleasures of animal life, is his unmerited and constant gift. With these exalted, delightful views of God, how full of joy is the conviction of the Christian, that this God looks on him with complacency and approbation! His heart is softened by the condescension of the infinite Deity, who notices with pleasure his feeble attempts to serve and to imitate him. He would not resign the honor of such friendship for the empire of the universe.

"My friends, did your hearts never beat with joy, when you have seen the eye of a beloved and revered friend and benefactor fixed on you with tenderness and approbation; and can you be wholly insensible to the pleasure of him who feels the presence of God wherever he goes, and is able to say, 'The infinite Parent of the universe is my approving friend'? Can any one be so blind as not to see that here is a source of unfailing, of increasing happiness? To the real Christian, the Divine character continually becomes more and more amiable. All creation, all the events of life, tend to endear to him his God. But the more he loves God, the more he must delight in the consciousness of his favor. The more his conceptions of the Supreme Being are enlarged, the more his heart must thrill at the thought, that this Being looks on him with the tenderness of friendship. You who know not from experience the pure and joyful sensations which are here described, can you form no conception of the happiness of that man who

looks round with adoring humility on the immensity of creation, on the endless variety of Divine blessings, and in the midst of his reverence and gratitude feels that the universal Parent, though encircled in his majesty, thinks of him continually, despises not his humble offering, is well pleased with his sacrifices of praise and love, and bears towards him an increasing, an unbounded affection? Are you so debased, as to prefer the sordid pleasures of sense, of the world, to a happiness so rational, so sublime? Can you consent to live without this delightful conviction, that the God who made you, the best of beings, delights in you as his children and servants? . . . . .

"Is there one who is wholly insensible to the blessedness of that man who has liberty of access to God, approaches him with confidence, speaks to him as a friend, spreads before him all his wants, believes that he is heard, and knows that he shall advance continually nearer and nearer to his Father, and be introduced to his presence in a purer world? These are the indescribable enjoyments of the man who is reconciled to God. The Christian who views God as his approving friend needs no compulsion to bring him into the Divine presence. The thought, that God condescends to regard him with a favorable eye, swells his heart with unutterable gratitude, and gives new ardor and confidence to his devotions. He no longer worships with cold formality a distant Deity, but casts himself into the arms of an ever-present Father. He no longer shrinks from God, as a being whom he has offended. He may, indeed, shed tears, but they are filial tears; he may blush, but it is from ingenuous shame, called forth by unmerited love; he feels that the Father whom he has offended has requited his guilt with infinite tenderness, and the recollection of his sins only gives a new glow and sensibility to the exercise of his devotion. What happy communion necessarily results from a consciousness of the favor of God! This consciousness

disperses all those fears which haunt the guilty mind. The thought of God, which once was painful, once filled us with apprehension of judgment, now becomes our highest joy, the centre of all our thoughts, all our hopes, all our affections. We glow with new sentiments, new anticipations. We feel a new dignity in our nature, when we conceive of ourselves as being the friends of God."

1809. UNIVERSAL RECTITUDE. "This is one important mark of him who hungers and thirsts after righteousness, that he is not satisfied with a *partial rectitude;* that he proposes all the branches of holy living, and seeks to preserve a conscience void of offence both towards God and towards man. He proves himself to be a sincere lover of righteousness by choosing it without reserve and without exception. He endeavours to become acquainted with his whole duty, to enlarge his conceptions of excellence, to form a correct standard of human perfection, and he labors to bend to this all his actions and desires. He does not dwell with complacency on some constitutional propensity which looks like excellence, and flatter himself that he needs nothing more. He rather fixes his eyes on his deficiencies, and is more solicitous to supply what is wanting than to admire what is already possessed. He does not apply himself to duties which are easy and pleasant, and rest in these as his title to the Christian character and hopes. He gives his first attention to those which are most difficult, in which he most frequently languishes, which are most opposed to his interest and ease; and judges of himself by the promptness and affection with which he does these. He has no desire to substitute one command for another, to relax any of the commands by superfluous strictness in the rest, to plead his general obedience in extenuation of particular offences, to balance his virtues against his sins, and thus to quiet himself in a broken, partial, limited observance of the laws of God.

Whatever bears the stamp of Divine authority, of righteousness and goodness, he venerates and loves. It is his end to render his character a consistent, harmonious, well-proportioned whole, an assemblage of all Christian graces, in which the love of God shall be the supreme, the animating, the all-pervading principle, regulating every desire, setting just limits to every duty, and nourishing and guiding every social and useful affection."

1805. GROWTH IN HOLINESS. "True religion is not to be measured by subservience to a farther end; but is *the end of ends* itself. It is the health, purity, vigor, rectitude, of the soul; and can too much of these be possessed? Is there an attainable degree of them which we should not desire and pursue? Can God, the infinite fountain of good, — whose glory creation reflects, and before whom creation is as nothing, — can he be too much loved, revered, or praised? Can we ever render him all the honor which is his due? Shall we ever embrace his whole character and government, and have reason to restrain our views and affections, for want of new excellence to behold and admire? . . . . .

"Let us feel that the authority and excellence of God claim all our hearts, all which we now are, all which we can be; that it is the glory of the hosts of heaven to be conformed to his image and his law; that we can approach those higher orders only by growing in piety and goodness; that religion is the excellence of the intellectual nature in all its varieties and degrees; that this is the only true improvement of our nature, and that we can never rise too high; that according to our growth in these will be our rank in the scale of existence; and, in a word, that by these alone we approach God and prove ourselves his children. . . . . .

"Religion is the rectification of the soul; it is inward

health ; it is the direction of affection to the most interesting objects. It consists of feelings and dispositions which include every thing generous, disinterested, sympathetic, and pure. It is in its very nature peace. . . . . .

" If, indeed, there were narrow limits to the Divine nature and perfection, and scanty happiness to be promoted in his system, then the joy of extended piety and goodness might be changed into sorrow, at the discovery of the imperfection and narrowness of the objects. But the infinity of God and of his designs and government is an assurance that the most fervent affections shall not be disappointed. His character invites the warmest friendship, the most exalted complacency and esteem. His condescension encourages unbounded confidence. His goodness animates unbounded hope. . . . . .

" What an argument is it for growth in religion, that by it we shall be raised to angelic purity and happiness ! What a commendation is it of that excellence which the Christian is called to cultivate, that heaven holds nothing more precious, — that heaven consists only in superior degrees of this excellence of soul ! "

1805. Signs of growth. " We are not growing in religion, if we make piety a substitute for kindness, or kindness a substitute for piety ; if we hope by generosity to atone for extravagance or lust, or by honesty to atone for avarice. We are not growing in religion, if we are satisfied with performing occasional acts which suggest themselves to our minds, but make no exertion to learn how we may pursue the whole will of God. We are not growing in religion, if the thought of living habitually in any omission or any positive disobedience sits easy upon us, and makes no painful impression. If, on the contrary, our consciences testify that God's goodness and majesty excite us to seek *universal obedience ;* if in our hearts we feel that

every branch of known duty is the object of our attention and pursuit; if we can hope that not one sin of heart or life is habitually allowed and knowingly indulged, — then we may expect to grow in all excellence. Then the various duties which we seek to perform will confirm one another. Our temperance will invigorate our love, and this our piety, and piety will add stability to both. In a life in which all duties meet, there is a harmony which is favorable to all. One spirit circulates through all. They grow like the limbs of a well-proportioned body. . . . . .

" When our duty and our happiness shall entirely coincide, then we shall be perfect beings; and in proportion as we approach this state, we approach perfection. . . . . .

" When one is growing in religion, in excellence, he converts more and more the common pursuits of life into means of piety and goodness, and makes them the way to heaven. The spiritual temper gives more and more its own color to all objects, and influences every choice of the mind. The soul becomes more and more impregnated with piety and love, and sees and pursues all things under the influence of these principles. . . . . .

" If we are growing in Christian excellence, we shall become more simple in our characters. We shall be the same everywhere. The love of God and man will diffuse itself more and more through our common looks and words, emotions and actions. We shall feel this temper at home and abroad. It will influence us when no eye sees us, as well as when we are excited by numbers. It will lead us peculiarly to secret, unobserved performance of duty, to habitual acts of kindness and devotion which lie beyond the notice of man. We shall not only be more serene in provocation, more cheerful in affliction, more moderate in prosperity, but every thing will take a hue from religion, and lead to the exercise of pious, humble, disinterested affections. . . . . .

"If we are growing in religion, we shall make advance to this *simplicity* of heart, this harmonious, tranquil state of mind. We shall act more from *one principle*, act more and more for *one end;* and hence our feelings and actions will be more consistent, uniform; the color of our souls and lives will become more single; and we shall exhibit one form to the world and to our own consciences."

1804. HARMONY OF HOLINESS. "As no holy temper can exist in separation from any branch of moral excellence, it follows that particular actions are to be approved only when they evince a general conformity of heart to the law of God. There is a beauty in real religion. All its sentiments and views and desires are harmonious; all its actions are guided by one light, and animated by one spirit. It is founded on the crucifixion of selfish affections, and it flows out in good-will to God and man, and in complacent regard to all excellence in heaven and in earth. It has no desire to avoid particular duties, for its happiness springs from the simplicity and consistency of its principles and pursuits; and its serenity would be destroyed by the counteraction of holy and sinful dispositions.

"If, my friends, you are animated by real religion, it will appear in the beautiful and harmonious exercise of all holy dispositions. You will possess a principle of devotion and of impartial benevolence, which will eradicate the debasing and enfeebling lusts and passions of your souls; which will dispose you to blend your interests with those of other beings; which will unite you with the universe, and flow out in tenderness to man, and submission to God. Trust not in any single virtue. If your religion be genuine, it will draw in its train the whole of moral excellence. Search, then, whether in all respects you are conformed to the law of God."

1805. FUTURE REWARDS OF USEFULNESS. "One great end of the Deity in forming such an extensive connection and dependence in his system undoubtedly is, that he may give room to the benevolent exertions of his children. He peculiarly delights in communicating happiness through the good exertions of his creatures. He has so constituted the universe, that its happiness flows from the coöperation of its various parts, from benevolent reciprocation, and the mutual dispensing of blessings. God, therefore, may be considered as governing, not so much to impart good immediately, as to bless the good exertions of the benevolent. Hence we see that every benevolent deed will produce by its success peace and joy to the heart from which it flows; for there is One infinitely wise and powerful, who has taken upon himself the care of advancing every labor of love; the good heart, therefore, will for ever be called to rejoice in the happiness which it has produced.

"Why may we not suppose that the blessedness which will be enjoyed in the heavenly world will be the result of the joint exertion of all good beings; and that each will have the felicity of knowing that by his humble labors the blessings of God have contributed to this abundant increase? In the present state, indeed, we see but little of the consequences of actions. Often the benevolent seem to labor in vain; seldom do they witness a harvest proportioned to their desires; and hence they are in danger of fainting in well-doing. But the scene which now meets our eyes is narrow in comparison with the mighty system of God. We know not the modes in which he operates. We cannot take in the innumerable ways in which he makes the labors of the good conducive to the end they propose. At the great consummation of all things, the darkness will be dissipated, and the good will reap. *Then* they will see their prayers, their toils, their liberal contributions, their exhortations, all their various exertions for the interests of men, and for the

kingdom of the Redeemer, improved by infinite wisdom to accomplish the happiest ends. They will see that their good works failed to accomplish the object they desired, only that they might conduce to greater good. They will see happiness existing and destined to exist and to increase for ever, which they were the honored instruments of promoting. They will be hailed by some grateful voice, ascribing to their prayers and exertions the attainment of heavenly blessedness. They will see the connection of their labors with the prosperity and triumphs of the kingdom of God. And joy will fill their hearts at finding that they have not lived in vain, — that while, perhaps, they have labored in stations too humble for the notice of man, they have been workers together with God, and been permitted to lay the foundation of felicity which shall never end. . . . . .

"True benevolence is not happy in itself; it is happy in the felicity of other beings; and in proportion to its strength we shall ardently desire to attain to a state of existence in which we may behold and promote the highest good, may grow in goodness, become members of an active society warmed with purest benevolence, and be entirely devoted to the designs of the merciful God. The prospect of eternal life must be inconceivably more dear to a benevolent heart than to any other being, because this heart is fixed on an object so glorious and extensive, that it wants an eternity to enjoy and pursue it. Take away the rewards of the gospel from the benevolent soul, let him see no spheres of usefulness beyond the grave, let him see all his labors confined to the narrow sphere of this changing world, and his heart will sink and grow cold. There will be no object large enough for him to embrace. The good heart naturally allies itself with eternity. It is its nature to expand its views. Let it behold a kingdom of endless and increasing glory under the government of infinite love, and let it be

invited to press forward to this kingdom, and its benevolence will give it vigor to pursue the prize.

"It is true, indeed, that if the common conceptions of the world respecting the rewards of the gospel were just, the benevolent heart could not pursue them. Men make a heaven of pleasures in no respect congenial to the heart of benevolence. A good man can be quickened only by the prospect of a future world in which goodness will be exercised and displayed. Jesus will reward his followers, not by introducing them to a paradise of sensual delight and to bowers of undisturbed repose; but by enlarging their faculties, shedding new light into their minds, and welcoming them to a state where every excellence will be confirmed, — where they will behold God as a friend face to face, and approach the Divine majesty with new affection, — where they will accomplish the Divine purposes with increasing vigor, delight, and success, and receive and communicate more happiness in an hour or a day than they have done in the whole of their lives on earth. Here is an object worth ambition. Here is an immortality the thought of which should kindle every hope and desire, and quicken to the practice of universal piety."

1810. MAN'S SPIRITUAL PERFECTION THE END OF PROVIDENCE. "By these obvious remarks we are led to the very important truth, that Providence has a principal regard to the mind of man, that divine principle by which man is distinguished above all the other inhabitants of the earth, and is rendered so capable of progression in truth, virtue, and happiness. To the Infinite Mind nothing can be so dear as *mind*. There is nothing over which he must watch with such affection. To a wise and good Creator no object can be so important as souls capable of goodness and wisdom; and to form, expand, enlighten, purify, invigorate, and bless these souls must be the great end of his adminis-

tration. The perfection of mind, or of intelligent creation, is the great end of God.

"Do you ask in what this perfection consists? I answer, in *knowledge*, in *love*, and in *activity*. That mind which has a wide range of thought, knows much of God and of his creation, and loves what it knows, — which is bound by a strong affection to its Creator and its fellow-beings, and acts as well as loves, — which puts forth all its powers, employs all its knowledge, in the service of God, and in blessing his creatures, — that mind is a perfect mind; and it is as happy as it is perfect. Its happiness partakes of the purity and serenity of the Divine felicity. Now this I conceive is the end of God, to bring his rational offspring to this perfect and blessed state, to give them the widest, clearest, and brightest views, to give them the strongest, purest, most disinterested love, and to form them to the most vigorous and efficient exertion of all their powers in the promotion of the best designs."

SECTION SECOND.

HUMAN NATURE.

1811. PRINCIPLE OF RELIGION IN HUMAN NATURE. "We have not merely capacities of attaining just ideas of God; there is a foundation in our nature for feeling and loving, as well as discerning, his character. Let us dwell on this point. In human nature there is a sensibility to what is great and good. There is no man whose heart has not sometimes been moved, when he has heard of illustrious deeds, of pure, exalted, disinterested goodness, of an enlarged and vigorous mind employed in vast and noble designs. Now this moral sensibility is a preparative for the love of God, an impulse towards him, and evidently designed to be a bond of union between him and the human heart. In his character alone can this love of excellence find an adequate object and full

gratification. We represent to ourselves higher excellences than we discern in the best around us, and want a purer and more disinterested friend than earth can give. God is the only being without stain or blemish, without excess or defect. He is unerring wisdom, unsullied purity, unfailing faithfulness, impartial rectitude, and unbounded, unwearied, all-ennobling, universal goodness. Are we so constituted, that these qualities, when dimly seen in imperfect man, impress the heart, and shall we not direct our minds and hearts to this Being, in whom they are concentred in infinite perfection, and shine with unclouded splendor ?

" This sensibility to excellence should be cherished by us, and employed to unite us to God. Have you ever felt the heart glow, whilst you have contemplated the true and good ? Then you will acknowledge that this is one of the happiest, most improving, and ennobling sentiments of which we are capable. We not only enjoy, but catch the excellence we admire. That mind which is often directed towards the best of beings will not only possess a happiness peculiarly pure and refined; it will approach the goodness it loves, it will catch a ray of the celestial glory, it will be changed into the same image. God cannot enter the heart without leaving traces of himself. It might seem presumptuous to speak of man as being a partaker of the Divine nature, did not Scripture employ this bold and elevated language. But this is really the happiness of him who contemplates God in his venerable and amiable perfections, until he is warmed with love. Why, then, do we not love God ? . . . . .

" God is, in the strictest propriety of language, our Father. What is the love of God, then, but a refined filial affection ? And this is an affection which we drew in with our first breath, and which was implanted at the very dawn of our being. From this view of love to God, we may see that the foundation of it is laid, that the heart is in a degree prepared for it, by the earliest feelings. We were learning this duty as soon as we began to learn any thing. This

bond of union with God was formed in our cradle; why, then, do we not follow this indication of the end for which we were formed? Why do we not lift up our hearts to our Heavenly Father? Does not the sentiment of filial reverence and love towards such a parent approve itself to our minds, our consciences, as reasonable, becoming, fair, and lovely? Is man ever more ennobled than when he feels his high and near relation as a child of the infinite God? . . . . .

"Let me mention one other principle of our nature which forms a foundation of the love of God, and marks us out as designed for piety. I refer to that sense of the insufficiency of worldly enjoyments, to that thirst for higher happiness than the world can give us, which I trust all who hear me have felt and can understand. There is an unsatiableness in human desires. Look where we will among our fellow-beings, and we can hardly avoid seeing that there is disproportion between the capacious mind of man and the sources of enjoyment by which he is surrounded. Our wants, instead of being satisfied, grow with possession. We imagine that this and another object will fill our minds and wishes. We obtain it, and are still hungering and discontented as before. The first moment of success and gratification may inspire transport, but we soon feel that the good we have sought is insufficient. It leaves a void. Perhaps it only inflames desire, and makes us more restless than before. With an ardent thirst for happiness, for increasing, permanent, and even endless happiness, we are placed in a world where nothing fills the mind, where the brightest prospects are soon darkened, and where the thick gloom of approaching death hangs over every path. In such a state the heart feels the want of something which the world cannot give, — it wants an unchangeable being of boundless perfection, on whom it may repose, and in whom it may find excellence wide enough for its ever-enlarging capacities."

1810. SPIRITUAL THIRST, ASPIRATION. "Have you not felt that you possess a nature far exalted above the brutes, souls infinitely superior to your bodies, souls which ally you to higher orders of being, — that you are capable of knowledge, of goodness, of virtuous friendship, of intercourse with heaven? and has not an inward voice admonished you that you were made for this felicity, and has not this felicity excited some thirst, some earnest desire? Have you never felt that this intellectual nature admits of endless improvement, — that whilst the body grows for a few years, and to a limited extent, the soul has no bounds, — that you may enlarge your being, leave your present selves behind, and take a new rank in creation? Have you never lifted an aspiring eye to the eminence which has thus invited you, and been pained and humbled by your sloth, your low, earthly views, your reluctance to become what you might be, what you were made to be? and have you not, for the moment at least, spurned the bondage of your passions, and resolved to press forward to the excellence and liberty of children of God? Have not objects of a noble character, generous and useful pursuits, sometimes presented themselves to you, and brought with them the consciousness, that he alone is happy and excellent who gives himself up to them? and have you not blushed at the recollection of the narrow and trifling objects which have filled your minds and wasted your time? and have you not wished to live for something wider, for ends which embrace the best interests of others as well as your own? Has the thought of the great, good, and perfect God never come home to you with force? and have you never felt that he is the most worthy object of your hearts, that in forsaking him you are wretched and guilty, that there is no happiness to be compared with loving him, and enjoying his love and presence? and have you not felt some pain at your distance from him, some desire to return to your Father, some thirst after the knowledge and favor of this

best of beings? Have you not sometimes heard of distinguished excellence in beings of your own race, of men in whom the glory of humanity has broken forth, whose fervent piety, whose patient endurance of calamity, whose generous self-denial, whose perseverance in duty have almost taken them out of the order of beings to whom they belong? and has not this heavenly excellence touched some kindred chord within you, kindled some warmth, excited you almost to rapture? Have you not done homage to holiness and virtue, felt that they are worth more than the riches and bawbles of the world? Have you not sighed after the excellence you admire, and wished to be the object of that complacency, approbation, and love which this excellence always excites in ingenuous minds? Have you never looked into your own hearts, and shed tears over the ruin which you there beheld, over your disordered passions, your prejudices, your errors, your ingratitude towards God, your injustice and insensibility towards men? and have you not thirsted after deliverance from sin, after a better state, after that perfection, the idea of which has not been obliterated by human apostasy, and the hope of which is one of the first and most powerful impulses towards the renovation of our nature?"

1807. Morbid sensibility. "When God is banished from our habitual reflections, we lose the only ground of consistent conduct, and fall easy victims to temptations and delusions. . . . . .

"Some men possess a delicacy of taste, and a sensibility of soul, which render them uneasy and dissatisfied with the grossness of animal pleasures. But instead of elevating their views to a spiritual state, they employ imagination in refining away the impurities and removing the imperfections of wordly enjoyment, and intoxicate themselves with airy dreams of unalloyed felicity. Roses without thorns, streams

ever clear, seas ever smooth, skies ever blue and serene, love ever warm, hope ever new and gratified, applause without envy, profusion without labor, and undisturbed retirement in the sequestered cottage and peaceful valley, — these are the stuff of which their baseless fabrics are composed. This wildness of imagination is one of the greatest dangers which beset unexperienced youth. Satan appears as an angel of light, when he guides us to these worlds of fancy. We feel a superiority to the world in ascending these airy heights, and pride ourselves in this refinement of the soul. But nothing is more ruinous. We learn to loathe the common pleasures and duties of our present existence. After arraying ourselves in robes of honor, we cannot take the low seat which Christianity assigns us, and humble ourselves in sackcloth and ashes. After relieving worlds with our bounty, we cannot content ourselves with the little offices of kindness which form the principal exercise of our benevolence. After associating with congenial spirits and exalted minds, we find the common sense of the world insipid, and its common forms cold and repulsive. Thus this diseased sensibility alienates us from our fellow-men, and unfits us for useful exertion. . . . . .

" Others waste thought, not in delineating bright prospects, but in throwing shades and darkness across the future, brooding over possible misfortunes, and cherishing irritable anxiety about events which they cannot control, and which piety would submit to the providence of God. Our Saviour says, " Take no thought for the morrow " ; but these people think of little else, and make every blessing a curse by the fear of losing it. In these various ways, the mind, instead of acquiring strength and knowledge by useful exercise, is enfeebled and intimidated; and, instead of generous fortitude and persevering patience, exhibits the imbecility of childhood and the irritableness of dotage."

1807. The discipline of life. "If, indeed, God designed to give as much ease and rest to rational beings as possible, — if this were the happiest state, — we might wonder at many vicissitudes which we behold. But God has the better end in view, of training up the mind to attention, observation, perseverance, and efficiency; and in this view all those changes are good which disturb our indolence, which compel us to look forward, and to form and execute long and laborious plans. Even danger is sometimes the best state for the individual. Apprehensions of great evil may be necessary excitements. This is not mere speculation. We everywhere see the happy influence of the difficulties, exigencies, hardships, and even dangers of life. We see minds, if I may so speak, of a stronger texture formed by scenes of trial. Those habits of sound judgment, of calm deliberation, of steady effort, of bold, unconquerable perseverance, which we so much admire, are the effects of situations in which men feel that they have much at stake, that they are exposed to serious evils, that they must act with prudence and vigor, or they will certainly suffer."

1810. The blessings of hardship. "Let none consider this state of things as severe, as reflecting on the goodness of the Creator. The difficulties of our state are among its best blessings. The distance at which good objects are placed, and the obstacles which intervene, are the means by which Providence rouses, quickens, invigorates, expands, all our powers. These form the school in which our minds and hearts are trained. Difficulty and hardship bind us more closely to objects. We love more ardently what we have suffered to attain, and enjoy nothing so exquisitely as what we have pursued through calamity and danger. It is in such pursuits, when we endure and labor for ends which conscience and religion enjoin, that our whole nature is called forth and perfected. The heart gains new ardor, the

understanding new clearness and vigor. A delightful consciousness of rectitude sustains us even if we fail, and gives a rapture to success. Especially if the ends for which we toil and suffer are of a benevolent character, do we receive a reward which swallows up our sacrifices and pains. The virtuous friendships which grow out of such labors, the glow of affection with which we are embraced by the good and holy, the consciousness of acting in union with Jesus Christ, and the excellent of all ages and all worlds, the sympathy, and approbation, and love which we excite, are indeed luxuries of the heart which cannot be too dearly purchased. Never does conscience speak to us in such cheering tones; never does our Heavenly Father look on us with such approbation; never are we so dear to those whose love it is indeed an honor and privilege to enjoy; never does our nature seem so exalted, so worthy of its Author, so worthy of immortality, as when we devote ourselves to the best interests of our fellow-beings, and, undismayed by danger, unseduced by pleasure, unwearied by hardship, unprovoked by contempt, and reposing a humble confidence in God, the originator and rewarder of all good exertions, press forward with every power to the holy end we have proposed. Who, then, will repine at the hardships of a good life? These prove, refine, and exalt the human character. Ease, indulgence, luxury, sloth, are the sources of misery. They benumb the mind, quench the warm emotions of the heart, sever man from his Creator and his fellow, and make him a poor, sordid, selfish, wretched being."

1810. BLESSINGS OF PROGRESS. "There is a happiness in progress, in anticipation, in activity, which no man, I think, would exchange for a quiet, unchanging, unimproving felicity. There is an unspeakable delight in rising, in having something in view better than our present state, in the

animation of hope, in the eagerness of pursuit, in the consciousness of having gained our elevation by our own labor; and all this happiness would be wholly lost, were we created in a state of the greatest possible elevation. Were the inconsiderate wishes of men granted, they would place themselves in a condition which would deprive them of some of the best enjoyments of humanity. They would leave in the divine system none of those excitements to which we owe the vigor of our minds and the warmth of our hearts. They would crowd into the present all future good."

1811. DUTY OF SEEKING TRUTH. "It is the great excellence of man, that he is capable of knowledge, — that he not only receives impressions from outward things, but can compare and combine what he sees, can learn the properties, causes, and influences of surrounding objects, can discern the future in the present, and rise from visible nature to its invisible Author. He is formed for the acquisition and application of truth; and his happiness and excellence very much depend on the truths he perceives. A mind which is open to truth, which sees things as they are, which forms right judgments of its own duties and condition, and of the character and rights of all with whom it is connected, is immeasurably exalted above the narrow, dark, confused intellect, which sees every thing as through a mist, gives to every thing the color of its own feelings, confines itself to what coincides with its wishes, contents itself with superficial views, and thus perpetually falls into errors and misapprehension. . . . . .

"It is sometimes asserted, that belief, assent, or judgment is beyond our control, that we cannot think as we please, that we are necessarily swayed by evidence, and that therefore we cannot be accountable for decisions of the understanding. It is true that the understanding is obliged to conform to the evidence which it distinctly discerns. If I

distinctly perceive in my neighbour the undoubted marks of a certain character, I must ascribe to him this character, however I may wish to reverse the judgment. When evidence is brought fully before the mind, and forced on its attention, belief or opinion does become a necessary result. It is no longer subjected to our power; and there is nothing morally good or evil in convictions which are thus irresistibly formed.

"But it is comparatively rare that the mind is subjected to this compulsion. Generally speaking, evidence is not forced on the attention. It is placed within reach, but not so near that we are obliged to see it. On the contrary, a voluntary effort is generally required to bring to view the arguments which support or oppose an opinion on which we are called to decide. The operations of our minds are left very much to our own control. We cannot, indeed, judge in opposition to the evidence we see; but then it depends on ourselves whether we will see the evidence which is placed before us. If we please, we can shut our eyes upon it. We can overlook proofs which we do not wish to feel. We can select particular views of a subject, and dwell on them to the exclusion of all the rest. And in this way we may bring ourselves to believe almost any thing we please. The present life has been often and justly represented as a state of trial; and it seems peculiarly designed to try the fairness and honesty of our minds. Truth is not hidden from us by an impenetrable veil. We may discern it, if we please; but it does not present itself in so definite a form and so clear a light, that we cannot but discern it. . . . . .

"These observations on the common guilt of voluntary error teach us the great importance of cherishing fairness and honesty of mind, a supreme love of truth, and a determination to follow it wherever it may lead, or whatever sacrifices it may require. This temper I would most ear-

nestly recommend to you, as the happiest and noblest temper, as the great duty of a rational being, and as indispensable to a consistent, useful, self-approving, and respected life. . . . . .

" Am I asked in what this honesty of mind consists, or what is included in it? I answer, — would we be honest, we must fill ourselves with a deep sense of the *infinite value of truth*, with a desire to see every thing as it is, to form a right judgment on every subject; and we must labor that this desire may exceed in strength all those passions which so often darken and blind the understanding. A supreme love of truth, a disposition to make all sacrifices to it, and to follow it, though it lead to contempt, loss, and danger, — this is the very essence of honesty of mind; and where this exists, it will induce impartial and serious inquiry.

" Our honesty of mind bears an exact proportion to the patience, steadiness, and resolution with which we *inquire*. When an opinion is proposed to us which does not agree with our past conceptions, we must not reject it as soon as proposed, and, to save ourselves the trouble of inquiring and the shame of retracting, say that on this point we have made up our mind; but, on the contrary, under a sense of fallibility, we must be willing to review our opinions, to examine afresh their foundations, and to receive any new light which our opponent may throw on the subject. We must be very careful, too, not to enter on the discussion with a previous determination to form only one opinion. This is the case with many. They profess to be willing to inquire; and yet they are fully satisfied, before they begin, as to the point at which they will stop. But this is only a mockery of examination; and we may as well spare ourselves all trouble, and hold fast our present opinions without pretending to sift them. Our duty is to enter on the consideration of every subject with a sincere desire to learn the truth, and to renounce whatever errors we may have imbibed. For

this end, we should meet the subject fairly, look it fully, if I may say so, in the face, and give ourselves time to examine it with deliberation. We must not cast over it a glance, and from unmanly sloth pretend that we see all which can be seen, and hurry to a conclusion before we have laid a foundation for correct judgment. We must not catch at arguments which support the sentiment we approve, and say these are unanswerable, and refuse to look further. We are very apt to shut our eyes, under pretence that there is nothing to be seen, at the very moment that new light is breaking in upon us. Unhappily, this new light detects old errors, and therefore it is that we eagerly exclude it. Instead of this partial view, we must labor to attain as full and comprehensive a knowledge of the subject as possible. We must invite evidence from all quarters, open our ears to all that can be urged on both sides, and give attention to every argument proportioned to its importance. In this especially consists an honest inquiry for the truth. All our passions and prejudices incline us to hear only one party. Would we be honest, we must extend our views, and weigh with seriousness what is urged in favor of opinions we dislike. We too easily take it for granted that an opponent has nothing to urge in his favor. Let us first hear, and then decide.

"After this dispassionate attention to all the evidence within our reach, the time for *judging* has come. Perhaps our inquiries have left us in a state of doubt on subjects where before we were confident. In this case, we must be careful not to express a stronger belief of a sentiment than we really feel. Perhaps it will be expected that we shall use the language of decision. But our language should ever be the faithful expression of our conviction. When we affect greater confidence in a sentiment than we possess, we become interested in bringing our mind into this state of confidence, and shall almost inevitably be led to practise

imposition on ourselves, as well as on others. Perhaps, in consequence of this inquiry, we shall come to a decision, but to a very different decision from what others wish and expect. This is a trying condition; but we must show our sense of the sacredness of truth by steadfastly adhering to it, wherever we are called to express our sentiments. Nothing should tempt us to belie the convictions of our minds. It is better to be forsaken and renounced by men, than to seek their friendship by affecting compliance with what seem to us errors. We are not called to be forward, rude, intemperate, in expressing our sentiments. We ought to be prudent; but Christian prudence is never to be separated from Christian simplicity and sincerity. When called to act, we should uniformly espouse what we deem to be truth, and in this cause should be willing to suffer. . . . . .

"This is honesty of mind, — a most noble spirit, — the distinction of a truly good and great man. It is a quality of character without which the most splendid talents are of little avail; for then intellectual vigor may prove a curse, and may only help to plunge us deeper into error. This fairness of mind is not a very showy virtue, especially when it is exercised in the common concerns of life; but perhaps it includes more magnanimity, courage, and self-denial than any other virtue. Multitudes have dared to face death in the field of battle, who have yet wanted strength and spirit to oppose their own and others' prejudices. . . . . .

"This virtue will especially give inward peace. The man of an honest mind has a consciousness of the truth of his convictions, which no other man can have. He learns to distinguish truth with an ease peculiar to himself. Truth offers herself, if I may so speak, in her native simplicity and beauty to an upright mind. . . . . .

"The fair and upright mind dwells in a region of light. Conscious of sincerity, it does not wish to hide itself from its own inspection, or from the inspection of God. It is

conscious of his approbation, and confidently hopes, through his mercy, to be at length released from all error, and to attain pure and unclouded vision in his heavenly kingdom."

1811. THE HABIT OF MEDITATION. "We should find ourselves far happier, even as it respects this life, were we to learn the art of *Meditation;* were we able to concentrate our powers on any subject, to exclude foreign thoughts; and, especially, could we find pleasure in applying our thoughts to worthy subjects. In this way our minds would be enriched. . . . . .

"I need not tell you the value of a sound, vigorous, discerning intellect. But the intellect acquires health and vigor by exercise, labor, close attention, patient observation. The treasures of wisdom are not to be seized with a violent hand, but to be earned by persevering labor. That solid judgment which estimates things according to their value, and points out the surest means of attaining the best ends, is the fruit of reflection on our own and others' experience. It is not the work of an hour or a day to store the mind with pleasing subjects of thought, with wide and just views, to give it a quick discernment, an habitual activity, and the power of forming extensive, judicious plans of action. None, surely, can be so mad as to expect a capacious and accurate intellect in those who live to be exhilarated, and who, for this end, give themselves up to a rapid succession of objects, who seek only scenes which promise pleasure, who place happiness in a whirl of excitement, in a light, hurried, unreflecting life, in boisterous and extravagant conversation, in bustle and show, and every method of quickening the spirits and dissipating the thoughts. . . . . .

"No means of instruction, of illumination, can be so perfect as to supersede, to render unnecessary, the exertion of our own powers. The mind must be active, in order to attain clear and influential views. There must be a love of

truth, a desire to know the character and will of God, and an honest application of the understanding to this object, or we shall ever dwell in a region of darkness and shadows; our ideas on these subjects will be dim, unsteady, and uninfluential.

"It is not true that a sufficient knowledge of duty is to be gained without serious attention. Nothing is more evident than that conscience is often erroneous, often defective. This faculty, like every other, is to be improved by care and habitual exercise. We are continually tempted to silence or seduce it.

"To attain clear and just views of our duties in their full extent, of the various virtues and excellences which belong to our nature and state, and which must combine to render the character perfect and the life truly happy, we must employ frequent reflection; — we must dwell on the precepts and life of Jesus Christ, in which all human excellences are unfolded; we must make our minds familiar with the lofty sentiments, pure principles, devout and generous affections from which the Christian is called to act; we must consider the various kinds of exertion included in each duty, the various modes in which each good disposition will express itself, the proper feelings and actions in the various circumstances amidst which we are to be placed.

"By this activity of mind on the duties of religion, we shall gradually attain a very desirable state of mind, so that we shall carry within us, as it were, a chart of Christianity. Conscience will be prepared with instruction in every condition into which we may be thrown. At every moment, the purest and best feelings and actions — such as we shall approve when we review our course — will rise to our view, and invite and attract us. This habitual activity and quickness of conscience, this power of seizing at the first glance on the best rules, on the most becoming, honorable, fit, and

useful course, is most desirable, if we would live consistently and escape remorse."

1810. HUMILITY AND THE DIGNITY OF MAN. "Humility is that impartial, just, and upright state of mind in which we view ourselves as we are. Humility has sometimes been described as a disposition to deny ourselves what we have, to think worse of ourselves than we really are, to take a lower seat than belongs to us. But Christianity is a religion of truth, and never calls us to practise deception on ourselves. It does not ask us to spend useless tears and regrets on sins we have never committed, or to apply to ourselves terms of degradation and reproach which we have not deserved. There is no firm foundation of religion but truth. To ascribe to ourselves imaginary imperfections and crimes is the mark of an abject and timid mind, and gives little reason to hope from us that improvement which is the great end of Christian humility.

"I wish to suggest some reflections on this leading virtue of the gospel, in order to show you that it is perfectly consistent with elevation of sentiment, with the most encouraging and ennobling virtues of the nature which God has given us. Humility has probably suffered in the estimation of many from the exaggerated and injudicious language of those who have wished to commend it. This virtue has sometimes been represented as including contempt for every thing belonging to human nature. Were this view correct, humility would deserve to lose its place among the virtues. It would generate a degraded mind, a depression of spirit, a low and sordid cast of thought and action. Humility is to be ranked amongst virtues only as far as it is founded on truth. Humility permits and requires us to view ourselves as we are, to ascribe to ourselves qualities which are suited to inspire respect and love as far as we possess them; but it requires us to stop here, to be equal-

ly sensible to our defects and sins, and to feel what is the truth,—that we have no claims on the respect and service of God and intelligent beings, compared with the claims which they have on us. This appears to me the essence of humility. We are not to be blind to any excellences we possess; but we are to feel that nothing is due to us compared with what we owe, and that it becomes us to cherish a sense of our inferiority, submission towards God, and modesty and meekness in our intercourse with other beings.

"It is a duty to estimate highly the *nature* which God has given. It should be regarded with reverence, rather than contempt. Our danger is, that we shall think of it too meanly, not too highly. We ought to think of this nature soberly, indeed, but still to attach to it a high importance. Man was formed in the image of God, and, notwithstanding the unhappy change which has taken place in his state, he has yet capabilities of excellence which show him to be a noble work of the Creator. There are yet in him powers of thought and action, a range of intellect, an ardor of feeling, a tenderness of conscience, a sensibility to what is right, which entitle man to respect. There are yet in him many indications of a being formed for the highest happiness, the happiness of wisdom, piety, and goodness. There are many testimonies, too, that man is not forsaken by his Maker. There is an indulgent providence extended over him; there is a liberality in the supply of his wants, there is a provision for the improvement of his faculties, which prove that he is yet an interesting object in the sight of God. Yet more, we have an evidence of the most affecting kind to the value of human nature. God has given his own Son, — a being respecting whose nature, perhaps, revelation communicates no precise ideas, but whom we are yet taught to view as sustaining a peculiar relation to the infinite Father, and peculiarly beloved by him,—he has given this only-begotten Son to perform for us the kindest offi-

ces, to sustain toward us the most interesting relation,— that of saviour, friend, guide, and giver of eternal life. He has sent this beloved Son to take our nature, to become one of us, in the human form to display the virtues of heaven, and, by his promises, example, and aid, to inspire the same virtues into the hearts of mankind.

"Here is enough to attest the worth of our nature. Here we are assured that man is capable of the greatest, best, and most honorable endowments; that he can resemble God; that he is designed for immortality; that abodes in heaven are provided for his reception; that the society of that better world are ready to welcome him as a sharer of their excellence and happiness. Consider man as a favored child of God, united by the tie of brotherhood to the Son of God, called to an immortal life, destined to endure and improve through all ages, to extend his views and affections, to fill a wider and wider sphere, and to perform more and more noble services in the universe, through an endless existence; — and surely such a being is not to be viewed with contempt. There is something sacred in that spiritual nature which the breath of God has quickened, and which the blood of Jesus has been shed to cleanse, refine, and make for ever happy.

"These views of human nature are not only warranted by Scripture, but I think an acquaintance with our race will lead a reflecting and pious mind to cherish the same hopes. We are sometimes permitted to behold humanity in so delightful a form, adorned with such virtues, exalted by such vigor of thought and such ardor of affection, so dead to self and so alive to all other beings, so superior, yet so unassuming, exerting an influence so beneficent, cheering, consoling, so resigned and devoted to God, and so sustained by the hope of heaven, so arrayed in intellectual and moral glory, that we have, as it were, a pledge of the height which man is to attain. Humility does not check these views, but rath-

er calls us to cherish them, to cast our eyes forward to the glory and honor with which humanity is to be crowned, to form large and generous hopes, to burn with a strong desire for this elevated state. It is by feeding on these sentiments that the mind is expanded, fortified, and impelled to excellence. It is by this hope we are saved. This hope makes us to become what it promises."

1808. HUMAN NATURE AS GLORIFIED IN JESUS. "The incarnation of Christ should inspire joy, as it is an attestation to the great capacities and excellence of human nature when undepraved by sin. That nature, which the Divine Word assumed, must be capable of every good principle and pure affection, and must be designed to bear the image, to reflect the perfections, of God. Were man a mere creature of sense, were he susceptible of no improvement in knowledge and holiness, were he not formed to draw nearer to this great original of all excellence and happiness, it is incredible that the Son of God would ever have appeared as the Son of Man. The incarnation declares man to be an important being in the creation of God. It declares that the human soul is a germ, in which are wrapt up noble powers, — an inextinguishable flame, which will grow bright and clear with truth and goodness. It declares that the interests of man are of boundless magnitude; and it proves that these interests are not forgotten, not forsaken, by God, — that man is precious in the sight of his Creator, that his powers shall not be lost, his nature not be left in ruin, his name not blotted out of the universe. O man! has God clothed his own Son in thy nature, and does he not teach thee that thou art formed to be his son, that thy nature is one of his fairest works, and that he views thee, though fallen, with unbounded compassion? Seek, then, to fulfil the designs of thy Creator! Admit the encouraging hope of restoration to purity; and let this hope help to raise thee from thy fall! . . . . .

"We have reason to rejoice that the 'Word was made flesh,' as, in consequence of this, we are favored with a view of human nature in a state of perfection. What a great and happy privilege! Human nature, as exhibited in every other being, is marked with imperfection and sin. Wherever we look, to whatever page of history we turn, we see human nature bearing traces of ruin. We see the glory of man obscured, his powers perverted, his understanding darkened, his conscience seared, his passions unrestrained. Even the best men are still frail, weak, and fallen beings. What reason have we to weep and blush, when we survey ourselves or our fellow-beings! Human nature and guilt and disorder seem inseparably connected. But when we look to the incarnate Saviour, we see man as he was before the fall, man restored, raised from his ruins, man in the true glory of his nature, man such as God designed. We see all the passions tempered and harmonious, and every word and action expressive of pure love to God and to mankind. . . . . .

"If we have attained any refined and elevated sentiments on human excellence, we owe them entirely to the character of Jesus Christ. He came into the world, not with the bloody pomp of the hero, but with all meekness and mercy, breathing nothing but peace and love. He came, not wrapped in the unsocial robe of the philosopher, but easy of access, ready to instruct, stooping to the feeblest understanding, and encouraging the most imperfect goodness. He came, not offering sacrifice, with the formalist, as the essence of piety, but serving God by active goodness and purity of life. In him human nature had laid aside all its ferocity, all its pride, its unforgiving malice, its violence, its selfishness, its sensuality, its discontent, and appeared all tenderness, humility, forbearance, liberality, patience, and self-denial. It was chaste and temperate in its thoughts and desires, resigned to God, unwearied in doing good, firm

without severity, ardent without passion, hating sin, and yet full of compassion for the sinner. How worthy of God does our nature appear, as it was exhibited in Jesus Christ! We see it unadorned by that outward splendor which is so often employed to cover its deformity, and yet it shines with a lustre which no outward show ever conferred. How grateful should we be that human perfection is thus placed before us, — not in description, but in *real life*, — that we are permitted to follow a perfect human being through the changes of an active career, and to learn from him the temper which we should maintain in all the vicissitudes of our present existence! The state of perfection to which man is to be raised is not an ideal one, does not merely exist in promise, is not something which is only hereafter to be known. Human nature *has already* been displayed, triumphant over all temptation, clear from every stain, glorious in love and holiness, pure as heaven, and bright with the image of God.

SECTION THIRD.

CHRIST AND CHRISTIANITY.

1811. Christ a gift of God's love. "There are some who are so desirous to magnify the justice of God, that they represent him as viewing our race with unmingled indignation, and speak as if his love towards man were excited, and even purchased, by the sacrifice of his Son. In this way the unthinking are led to associate the ideas of an awful justice with the Father, whilst they clothe the Son with the delightful and attractive attributes of mercy, and consider him as peculiarly the source of their deliverance. I do not say that it is the intention of any to make this impression. I only state the fact, that such impressions are produced by the unguarded language used on this subject.

"I fear that false conceptions have arisen on this subject, from the habit of speaking of our pardon and future happiness as '*purchased for us* by the death of Christ.' The effect of such language is to fix in many minds the idea that our Saviour has offered to God an equivalent, — a price for our happiness, — and thus obtained for us what would have been reluctantly bestowed, had we been left to the mercy of God. Many, indeed, do not carry this language so far; but they still feel as if forgiveness and future happiness were a *purchase*, and therefore not altogether the *gift* of free and pure benevolence. I will not say that it is improper to speak of our deliverance as purchased by Christ, because we usually speak in this manner of blessings which have been procured for us by the labors and love of other beings. But I am certain that this language never should be used, if the tendency is to weaken our convictions of the great truth, that God is moved with compassion towards us by the essential benignity of his nature; that of himself he is inclined to save our race; that his blessings flow to us from a sincere desire to bless us; and that pardon and life are free gifts, — not something paid for, — not something obtained for us from the severe justice of the Father by the compassion of the Son.

"I have said that our salvation is nowhere spoken of in Scripture as bought for us by Christ. I may err, although I have a strong conviction, that, on careful inquiry, you will find the statement correct. Christians themselves are said to be bought, but not their salvation. Thus, Christ is said to have 'purchased the church witn his own blood,' and the apostle says to the Corinthians, 'Ye are bought with a price, therefore glorify God.' But these passages convey a very different idea from what I have just opposed. They do not represent our blessings as purchased from God, but give us a sentiment as remote from this as possible. They teach us that God was so desirous to receive us again into

his family as his servants, worshippers, and children, that he was willing to give his own Son for us, to purchase us at this inestimable price. In the language of Scripture, men, having sinned and become subject to death, are represented as *enslaved to sin* and *to death.* In this wretched and hard bondage their Heavenly Father pitied them and desired their release, desired that they might be rescued from this cruel oppression, and restored to his easy and happy service, that they might enter his family, and become his property in the sense of yielding him cheerful obedience and of enjoying his love. To effect this most happy deliverance he sent his own Son; and as the wisest, most suitable, and effectual means to this end, he gave this Son to die the bitter death of crucifixion. According to the customs of the age when the Scriptures were written, it was very common to redeem men from captivity by paying a price. The blood or death of Christ, which is the instrument of our deliverance from the captivity of sinful affections and of death, is therefore called a price, a ransom; and we are said to be bought by it. This is the plain, obvious meaning of Scripture, and so far from representing our blessings as bought for us from God by another, it represents God as buying or purchasing us, that he may shed on us his richest blessings. The mercy of God has not been excited towards us by the mediation of the Son; but his mercy preceded, appointed this mediation, and gives it its efficacy."

1812. THE LIFE OF CHRIST. "Among the truths relating to Jesus Christ which should be preached, I have mentioned the *holiness of his life.* Let me here observe, that, from the large portion of the Gospels which is taken up in relating the life and actions of our Saviour, I cannot but think that preaching should be often directed to this subject. I cannot but think that this most delightful part of the

Christian system — the *life* which Jesus led, the *character* which he expressed — has been too much overlooked. The controversies relating to the precise dignity of his person have drawn attention from the holy and heavenly spirit which is everywhere discovered in the simple history of the Evangelists. The life of Jesus, as drawn in the Gospels, has been pronounced, perhaps with truth, the *strongest evidence* of his gospel, more impressive to a good mind even than the miracles. This, I think, may be affirmed with truth, that, if we would learn perfect goodness, if we wish to warm our hearts with the love of it, we can adopt no method so effectual as the study, the frequent contemplation, of the life of Jesus."

1810. CHARACTER OF CHRIST. "Jesus Christ is the Son of God in a peculiar sense, the temple of the Divinity, the brightest image of his glory. In seeing him we see the Father. On this account it is delightful to contemplate him. It is delightful to think that his mildness, compassion, forbearance, and unwearied goodness are beams, reflections, of the character of the universal Father. No other manifestation is so suited to teach us that God is love.

"It is also interesting to contemplate Jesus Christ, as in him are displayed, in the brightest forms, all the virtues and excellences of human nature. He, and he alone, is the perfect man, an unerring standard; and it is in contemplation of Jesus that we can best learn the glory for which our nature is designed, that we shall best learn to love and aspire after excellence. . . . . .

"It is a kind ordination of God that the evidence of Christianity should be a growing evidence. When we begin our inquiries into the truth of Christianity, we are first impressed with the miraculous works of Christ, those exertions of divine power which prove that the Father was in him, that he was commissioned from heaven. In proportion as

we attend to the subject, a new source of evidence springs up and brings new conviction to our minds. In the moral character of Jesus we see a miracle more striking than the most stupendous work of a physical nature. We see in brighter and clearer light the impressions and evidences of a sincere, upright, devout, and most benevolent heart. We see a character most original and yet most consistent; such as the Evangelists could never have feigned, such as impostors would never have imagined, but which is exactly suited to the wants and miseries of man, and to our highest conceptions of the Divinity.

"If from the contemplation of this character we are so blest as to imbibe the spirit of Jesus, our conviction of his excellence and sincerity acquires new vigor. Every attainment in purity and benevolence opens our minds to behold and enjoy yet more of the benignity and glory of the Saviour. We feel a new delight in studying his history, in tracing his life. We feel an accordance between our best and purest sentiments and the conduct and instructions of Christ, and we find these invigorated as our knowledge of his character is enlarged. We perceive ourselves growing more and more like God; we perceive our narrow and sensual hearts expanding with pure benevolence; we perceive the storms of passion calmed, and a serene hope in God and a patient endurance of injuries taking possession of our souls. We know by an evidence which we cannot communicate to any but Christians, that Jesus is the Son of God, for we feel ourselves elevated and strengthened by his presence. . . . . .

"I hope I am not insensible to the obligations of virtue and piety and benevolence, however displayed, however enforced. But never do I feel how lovely is virtue, — never do I feel so deeply my own wretchedness, unworthiness, and guilt, — never do I so earnestly desire to subdue my evil passions, and to put on humility and universal love, as

when I behold the glory of God in the face, in the actions, in the words, of Jesus Christ."

1808. The majestic claims of Jesus. "Can we read this solemn declaration of Jesus without wonder and veneration? We now see him in a situation where every thing tended to depress his mind. We see him surrounded by men who he well knew would ridicule his claims, and make them the foundation of his ruin. We see him in circumstances in which ambition and every earthly interest united to oppose the assertion of this high character. From his silence we see that at this trying moment he was perfectly composed, not agitated, not provoked, not hurried to imprudence by violence of passion, but capable of the calmest anticipation of the consequences of his acknowledgment. In this situation, when the solemnity of an oath was imposed on him, and when life or death rested on the words he uttered, we hear him breaking that silence which calumny could not interrupt, and in the most firm, serious, and majestic language claiming the honors of the Son of God, of the promised Messiah, of the Saviour of the world. We not only hear him assenting to the question, 'Art thou the Christ?' but adding to his assent a declaration of his glory, which he must have known would have been peculiarly offensive to the Jews, and applying to himself language which, under the old dispensation, had been limited to God, — thus expressing his intimate union with the Father. If we consider the solemnity of the occasion, and the language employed by Christ, we are authorized in saying, that, if Jesus did not declare the truth, he was not merely a common deceiver, but the very worst of deceivers. But how can this be reconciled with his whole life and doctrines? and how could a man of such a character have made such a profession in circumstances which threatened nothing but humiliation and suffering?

"If we view Jesus, bound as a criminal at a human tribunal, hemmed in with malignant enemies thirsty for his blood, how can we help astonishment at the serene, dignified, sublime language in which he spoke? What marks of an elevated mind, conscious of majesty, unintimidated by the worst forms of danger, and assured of triumphs over all opposers! It cannot be said that this is the language of boasting. It was extorted from the silent sufferer by an oath. He who had heard without reply the accusations of malice, and discovered a mind free from every discordant feeling, at length lifted his eyes to his judges, and declared, 'Ye shall hereafter see me sitting at the right hand of God, and coming in the clouds of heaven.'"

1808. Dignity of Jesus. "A few days before, he had entered this city in triumph, he had wrought miracles which extorted admiration, he had heard the shouts of a crowd welcoming him as the promised Son of David. Through this same city he now passed as a criminal in bonds, a silent sufferer, and experienced only contempt or indifference. He saw a fickle, worldly people converted into enemies, because he had refused to assume the outward glory which they expected in the Messiah. It is peculiarly hard to bear a sudden reverse of circumstances, to maintain benevolence towards men who, from selfish feelings, express attachment, and then forsake, injure, and conspire to destroy us. But Jesus wept over Jerusalem, when he foresaw its ingratitude; and even whilst its inhabitants thronged after him to extort a sentence of condemnation, he expressed no emotions of disappointment or anger, and bore, with equal tranquillity, the malignity of rulers and the versatility of the populace. He saw how little effect had been produced by his ministry. He saw his enemies prosecuting their designs without any of the opposition they had feared. No friends appeared to accompany and defend him. But

he made no attempts to excite anew the hopes and attachment of the multitude. And he, who had so often addressed them for their own salvation, offered not one appeal to secure himself. . . . . .

" Pilate marvelled greatly. He had been accustomed to observe in prisoners a disposition to clear themselves from such aggravated charges. He saw how easily these accusations might be repelled; he was astonished at the composed, unbroken silence of the accused. This silence of Jesus expresses great dignity and conscious innocence. He knew that the occasion required no defence. A Roman governor, residing in the narrow province of Judea, needed not to be told that no insurrection had been stirred up within his jurisdiction. Pilate must have been too well acquainted with the affairs of Judea, to need that Jesus should declare that he had forbidden none to pay tribute to Cæsar. Pilate must have known the Jewish people too well to believe that they would ever have accused a man who really aimed to break the Roman yoke from their necks. It was not necessary that he should speak in order to prevent misconception in his judge; and he was therefore silent. In this position of Jesus, in this declining to use any means with the governor or populace for his safety, we see the evidences of a mind submissive to God, superior to fear, undisturbed by passion, and persuaded that its sufferings were instrumental to some important end. This conduct of Christ, especially if we consider the friendly sentiments of Pilate, was inconsistent with all the views and motives which influence selfish men. . . . . .

" In these words we see the majesty and fearless composure of Jesus. 'I cannot and will not deny that I am a king. It is my great office to declare the truth; it is by the influence of truth, that I am to reign in the hearts of men; and I cannot shrink from asserting this most important truth, that I have the power and authority of a sover-

eign at once to rule and to defend my people. Let not this doctrine offend. Every one who is of the truth, who loves the light, and whose mind is open to conviction, heareth and acknowledgeth this and all my doctrines.' These words, spoken at so interesting and trying a period, discover to us the elevation of our Saviour in a very striking light. We see his mind unbroken by suffering. We see in him the firmest adherence to the doctrines he had formerly taught. We see in him a conscious dignity, a full conviction of the glory and power with which he was invested. He asserts his royal office, not from ostentation, not amidst a host of flatterers, but in the face of enemies; and when he made this solemn declaration, his appearance bore little conformity, indeed, to the splendor of earthly monarchs."

1813. CHARACTER OF JESUS CHRIST ILLUSTRATED IN HIS LAST PRAYER. "Observe in this prayer the self-possession of Jesus. Does the thought of his danger overwhelm him? He hardly seems to recur to it. His allusions to his death are only slight and distant, as if he feared to wound the tender and fearful minds of his disciples. "Father, I come to thee. I am now to offer myself. I am no more in the world." Such is the language in which he clothes the solemn event which was so near. Instead of being absorbed by his approaching sufferings, instead of indulging in depressing complaints, instead of appealing to the sympathy of those around him, we see his mind opening itself to the noblest views and sentiments, exerting itself with clearness and freedom, raising itself to God and heaven, and looking forward to distant ages. What marks of a pure and exalted spirit are here unfolded to us! . . . . .

"Observe next the filial trust which breathes through this prayer. Jesus had called himself the Son of God in language which had offended the Jews; but in the prospect

of danger and death he still claims the same high relation. We see not a trace of that apprehension which must have oppressed a mind conscious of having urged unauthorized claims to a mission from heaven. Hear his first words: — 'Father, glorify thy Son!' Can you read this prayer, and not see in every line the marks of filial trust? . . . . .

"Observe next the temper with which Jesus reviews his life. It is natural at the approach of death to look back. To a guilty mind the past is gloomy and appalling. To a holy mind it imparts a serene satisfaction and hope. What feelings did it awaken in Jesus? Hear his language: — 'Father, I have finished the work which thou gavest me to do. I have glorified thee on the earth.' What a mild, yet triumphant, consciousness of a holy life! . . . . .

"Observe, next, the majesty which is expressed in every part of this prayer. In what sublime language does Jesus everywhere speak of himself! Through his whole ministry, he had claimed the most exalted character and titles; and is he prepared to abandon these, now that they have roused the malice of the world? . . . . .

"From whom do these lofty words proceed? From Jesus, distinguished as he was in manner by meekness and humility; from Jesus, poor, friendless, and persecuted; from Jesus, ready to sink under the bloody cruelty of his enemies. What a singular union of lowliness and majesty! With what admiration ought we to contemplate that spirit, which, in circumstances so depressed, is yet in its claims and hopes so exalted, so unsubdued! The character which Jesus here assumes of Lord and Sovereign of the whole human race, appointed by God to recover the world to piety, and to give eternal life to his obedient disciples, is one which never before had entered human imagination; it is a character more august and sublime than was ever before assumed. But this character we find the humble and devout Jesus mildly claiming, in solemn prayer, at the ap-

proach of death. Although every event conspires to throw depression on his spirits and gloom over his prospects, although contempt and infamy threaten to overwhelm his name, his spirit is unbroken, his language is unchanged; he even speaks of the dignity of his character with new solemnity and elevation of style. What testimony is here given to his sincerity and greatness! Will any say that this is the language of enthusiasm? Read again this prayer; observe the calmness which pervades it. You see no transports, no raptures. A devout, benevolent, and mild spirit breathes through this whole act of piety; and, elevated as are his claims, you still see an all-pervading humility and reverence. . . . . .

" Let me next ask you to consider the benevolence of Jesus as it breaks forth in this prayer. In this view, I consider this act of devotion as peculiarly worthy of regard. It is a delightful testimony to the benignity and amiableness of his character. You will remember that he was in a few hours to die in the most ignominious manner by the hands of men. The murderous crowd were even now collecting, and thirsting for his blood. But not one mark of an inflamed or irritated mind can be found in his prayer. You hear no imprecation on his enemies. He delights to speak of himself as sent to give eternal life to men; and he desires to be exalted, that he may communicate to the whole world the knowledge of God. The universal benevolence which this prayer expresses has been obscured by an unhappy misinterpretation of a particular passage. Jesus, in praying for his disciples, says, 'I pray not for the world, but for them whom thou hast given me.' . . . . .

" The meaning of this passage is very obvious. He was now commending his chosen disciples to the particular care and blessing of God; and to enforce his request, he says, 'I pray not, I am not praying, for the world, for men who disregard thee, but for men devoted to thy service, and on

these I hope thy peculiar blessing.' That he did not mean to exclude the world from his intercession is very obvious from his whole language on the present occasion. For instance, why is he so earnest in praying that his disciples may be one, or perfectly united? He desires this, to use his own words, 'that the world may believe that thou hast sent me.' The reformation of the world is, in fact, the great object which fills the mind of Jesus through this whole prayer. He indeed prayed particularly for his disciples. But, observe, he prayed for them as preachers of his religion to the world. He regarded them, not in their individual, but in their public character. 'As thou hast sent me into the world, so have I sent them into the world.' His great desire and prayer was, that these men, to whom his religion was to be confided, should fulfil their high trust, and by their lives and preaching fill the world with his truth. The prospect of suffering could not drive from his mind a benevolent concern for the improvement and salvation of our race. Future ages crowded on his mind. Though insulted, dishonored, he thought only of enlightening and saving mankind. How ardent, sublime, and pure is this benevolence! You see him on the brink of suffering, but still forgetting himself, and extending his solicitude over the whole human race.

"But do not stop with observing Christ's universal benevolence. Observe, particularly, his tenderness towards his disciples. Do you here see any marks of a leader who has drawn after him followers only to swell his train, and to promote his triumphs? Is his regard withdrawn from them by the approach of personal evil? No. Never was Jesus more affectionate, more alive to their feelings and interests. In their hearing he offers up a fervent prayer, and commends them to God. On former occasions he had reproved them, but now no complaint escapes his lips, no allusion to their imperfections. On the contrary, he speaks

with satisfaction of their virtues. 'They have kept thy word'; 'they are thine, they are not of the world.' How soothing this approbation of a dying friend! This pleasure Jesus in death wished to leave to his mourning disciples. . . . . .

"Let me close my remarks on the character of Jesus, as expressed in this prayer, by desiring you to observe the strong, unsubdued hope, which he everywhere expresses, of the future triumphs of his religion. He was surrounded by a few trembling disciples, from whom he was soon to be severed, and who were to encounter the opposition of the world; but we hear no despondence, no doubts, no relinquishment of his great object. On the contrary, we see him anticipating a state of glory, in which he should extend the knowledge of God throughout the world; we hear him speaking with confidence of those who should believe on him in future ages, and praying for the conversion of all mankind. This energy of hope, in circumstances so depressing, marks a mind of great elevation. There is something unspeakably sublime in the spirit of Jesus, sinking as he was into the grave, and yet looking forward with a serene, unshaken confidence to the triumphs of his religion in all succeeding time. Whence this hope, and whence its accomplishment?"

1812. SINCERITY OF JESUS, AS ILLUSTRATED IN HIS DEATH.

"Let me first ask you, my friends, to observe the testimony which the last actions and words of Jesus bear to his mission from heaven, to the truth of his claims, to the Divine origin of his religion. How irreconcilable with deceit is the prayer with which he resigns his spirit, and how expressive is it of a heart conscious of its innocence, — how accordant with the character of the Son of God! Jesus was at this moment exhausted by acute sufferings, which he felt were immediately to end in death. His enemies were sur-

rounding him in triumph, exulting over him as a fallen impostor. Had he been what his enemies believed, can you imagine a condition more wretched, more suited to crush his fainting spirit? Scourged, mocked at, branded as a malefactor, driven from life with execration, he must have abandoned every hope from this world; and had the aspersions of his enemies been true, what could he have hoped in the future world? It is with pain that I make even this supposition. Had it been true, how full of horrors, how peculiarly destitute of comfort and hope, must have been his death on the cross! But do we see in Jesus one mark of a mind conscious of having spoken without authority in the name of God? Does he mourn over his blasted hopes, his disappointed schemes? Do we discover fear, despondence? Does he speak like one who was ready to be torn from every object for which he had lived; like one who felt in suffering a just reward for crime? Hear the last words which break from his dying lips: — 'Father, into thy hands I commit my spirit.' Is this the language of defeated imposture; or is it that of the Son of God returning to his Father? . . . . .

"With what unconquerable firmness Jesus adhered to his claims! Through all his sufferings, — sufferings which combined every circumstance to shake his resolute soul, — sufferings which he did nothing to avert and nothing to mitigate, — he held fast to the profession, that he was the Son of God; and his last breath bore this claim to heaven. Whence this firmness, when nothing but death was its reward? whence could it have originated, but in the consciousness of truth? . . . . .

"It deserves to be remarked, that this assertion of his claims was addressed by Jesus, not to the multitude, but to God himself. It was in prayer that he bore his dying testimony to his union with the Father; and if this testimony was not true, can you conceive of impiety more aggravated

than that with which the life of Jesus was closed? And this awful impiety had no motive; — and it closed a life of unspotted purity! Who for a moment can admit the thought? . . . . .

"What mark of deranged imagination do we discover? With what patience, composure, serenity, does he suffer! You hear no bursts of passion, no extravagance of language; and if you listen to his last prayer, what a mild, tranquil confidence does it express! Here is no boasting, rapture, transport. We see a gentle spirit resigning itself to its Father: — 'Father, into thy hands I commit my spirit.' There is a sublime composure in this death of Jesus, which I feel, but I cannot express. This is indeed the Son of God. . . . . .

"He is as great in death, as when his word revived the dead; as great as when multitudes hung in silent attention on his lips. Approach and see. His body is indeed disfigured, lacerated, stained with blood. But in that countenance, lifted up to heaven, what mild confidence beams forth! You see him anticipating immediate death. But death has no terrors. Death brings no agitation. In death he sees only the ascent of his spirit to his Father. What conscious uprightness, what firmness, what elevation of character, does this scene discover! Jesus has suffered, — drank deeply of suffering. But his spirit is unbroken; his mind is clear and collected; his heart is warm and active; it retains its hold on God."

1810. The universality of Christianity a proof of its Divine origin. "I wish at this time to call your attention to the extent of the influence which Jesus ascribes to himself in the text: — 'I am the light of the world.'

"He here represents himself as sent to diffuse his lustre through all the regions of the earth, to introduce a religion for the whole human race, to improve the human character

in every nation under heaven, to be a universal benefactor, to guide the steps of all men, however widely dispersed, to a better world. . . . . .

" From the whole tenor of the New Testament, we learn that Jesus Christ claimed to himself the high character of the guide, instructer, and Lord of the whole human family. He declared himself commissioned to diffuse most salutary doctrines through the earth, to bring all nations to one faith, to introduce a new worship in the place of the various systems which divided mankind, to unite the discordant world under himself as a common head. . . . . .

" It is, I think, an undisputed fact, that, before the time of Jesus Christ, no man had ever appeared who professed himself authorized by the universal Father to proclaim one religion to all mankind. The character of a Divine instructer of the whole world had never before been assumed. There had, indeed, been many who pretended to communications from God. Such were most of the ancient legislators. But they claimed only the commission to instruct the particular nation to which they were sent. Even Moses and the prophets were limited to one people. The plan of bringing all men to the belief and practice of one religion was never contemplated. No mind had formed so bold an attempt. The object was so little suited to their selfish principles of action, and presented such insuperable difficulties, that it does not appear ever to have occupied the thoughts of an individual. Before the time of Christ there had been great conquerors, who had cherished, and almost accomplished, the scheme of universal dominion; but they were satisfied with a dominion over the bodies and outward actions of men. They aspired not to subdue their minds. They overturned governments, but left religion untouched. It is an argument in favor of Jesus Christ, that he appeared in a character altogether new. His plan of producing a change in the religion of the world was wholly

his own. May we not argue, that, if he had acted on merely human principles, he would have resembled those who went before him? Human nature is the same in all ages. There is a peculiarity in the character of Christ, an originality in his purpose, a remoteness from the common views of men, a superiority in his objects to the greatest men who had appeared before him, which we cannot easily explain but on the supposition of his Divine commission. This great design suits the Son of God, but cannot easily be reconciled with another character. . . . . .

" That a Jew should devote himself to the work of bringing the world to a participation of the same religion, and this a new religion too, was indeed wonderful. There never was a people among whom so strong a national spirit existed as among the Jews; and their national pride was peculiarly built on this idea, that they had been, and ever should be, distinguished by their religious privileges from the rest of mankind. The idea of a religion, which should be the common and equal property and blessing of all nations, was the last idea which would have entered the mind of a Jew. Judea was the most unlikely place for the growth of so liberal a sentiment, so diffusive a system.

" Let me point out some of those features of the gospel which fit it for being a universal religion. The representations of God, given by Jesus Christ, are fitted to draw to him the hearts and hopes of all human beings. Under all other religions, the Divinity was represented as sustaining a peculiar relation to the particular nation for which the religion was designed. . . . . .

" But Jesus represented him as the Father of all, as having no regard to outward distinctions, as the God of Jew and Gentile, as looking with a father's compassion on those nations who had wandered from him, and as extending his arms to receive them. In the gospel, the *paternal* character of God is continually brought to view. ' Our Father,'

is the language in which we are to address him; and all men are invited to approach in the character of children. This is at once a very tender and a very noble sentiment. We, indeed, are so accustomed to it, that we see nothing singular in that religion which enforces it. But we should go back to the age of Christ. We should remember the blindness of the idolater, and the narrow feelings of the Jew; and then we shall be struck with the elevated and enlarged mind of Jesus Christ, who so clearly taught that God is no respecter of persons, that he is the God and Father of all men, and that before his throne all nations may bow and find equal acceptance. . . . . .

" Again, another feature of the gospel which renders it fit to be a universal religion is this. The worship it prescribes is remarkably free from forms, rules, ceremonies, and thus it is adapted to all climates, all modes of life, all states of society, and other circumstances under which men are placed. . . . . .

" It is very remarkable, that when he was brought up and living amidst the pomp, and show, and forms, and bigotry of the Jews, he should yet teach a religion in which the whole stress is laid upon sentiments, dispositions, and principles, which give to forms all their value; in which the worship of God in spirit and in truth is declared to be the only acceptable worship, and in which nothing of the outward religion and burdensome ritual of his time is to be found; in which are enjoined only two positive institutions, so simple and so expressive that they may be observed by all men of all nations with equal ease and with constant improvement. Does not this purity, this simplicity, this spirituality of the gospel substantiate the claim of Jesus, that he came indeed from God, to be the light of all mankind? . . . . .

" Let me conclude this branch of the subject with directing you to another feature of the gospel which fits it

to be a universal religion. It is a plain, perspicuous religion, and suited to the comprehension and wants of all classes of society. A universal religion ought to have, if I may so speak, the clearness, brightness, of the sun, and to diffuse its beams of truth and consolation on high and low, rich and poor, — on all the varieties of the social state. This is eminently the character of the gospel, and distinguishes it from all other religions. Jesus Christ, whilst he claimed the highest title, yet descended in a sense to the level of the humblest of mankind. He dispensed his religion in familiar language, in striking and easy comparisons, in affecting narratives, and in brief and comprehensive precepts. He did not, like the ancient teachers, affect a distance from the multitude, and reserve his mysteries, incomprehensible by vulgar minds, for select disciples. He addressed all men with one voice, with the same doctrines, promises, and admonition; and, what is remarkable, whilst he instructed the ignorant, he yet presented to the refined and intelligent more sublime and interesting truths than they had ever conceived before. He was simple and familiar, but in reading his discourses we discover a majesty in his simplicity, an authority mingled with his condescension. He taught as one who came to instruct the race, for he spoke on subjects which come home to every man's breast. He did not adapt himself to the circumstances of any particular age, or nation, or rank. He spoke of that God on whom all men depend, of that obedience and love which all men owe, of those sorrows which pierce every heart, of that sin which burdens every conscience, of that death which terminates every mere earthly prospect, and of that futurity to which the eyes of all nations have ever turned with inquiring anxiety. This is the excellence of the gospel, that it is fitted for the many, for the mass of mankind, in every age and every nation. It does not treat of local or temporary interests. It warns of danger to which all are exposed, en-

joins virtues which all may practise, and offers consolation which all at some seasons need. Its spirit, which is universal love and benevolence, is fitted for all climes, for all classes. It makes the true dignity of man in every condition; it forms the happiness of families and communities; and it is the best preparation for happiness in heaven. Surely a religion so suited to the whole human race is worthy the universal Father. And when we consider the circumstances of him who proclaimed it, and the darkness, narrowness, and corruption of the age in which he lived, have we not conclusive proof that he came from God, that the end for which he was sent will be accomplished, that he will yet be the light of the world in the most extensive sense of the words, and that his truth, designed for all nations, will finally be extended to all the regions of the earth?

"Before this sun of righteousness, the mists of error, superstition, idolatry, will melt away; all nations, receiving one pure faith, will be reduced to peace. The predicted time, when the lion and lamb shall lie down together, will come; from an enlightened and a united world one offering will ascend to the common Father and Redeemer. These are prospects which almost overpower belief by their vastness and their happiness. But God has sent his Son to be the light of the world; and causes are in operation sufficiently powerful to produce these desired effects. The diffusion of Christianity through so many nations, amidst so many difficulties in the past, is a pledge of its future progress. This religion is now the religion of the civilized world, of the most improved nations, of nations who are extending themselves through the earth, and who, according to all human probability, must acquire a decided influence over all other countries. Here, then, is a rock and foundation of hope to the good man amidst the fluctuations of the world. The cause of truth, holiness, and human improvement is the cause of God himself."

1811. CHRIST'S RELATIONS TO THE RACE. "The exalted state of our Saviour is a subject on which the Scriptures often dwell, although it is necessarily attended with a degree of obscurity. The manner in which he now exists can very faintly be conceived by us. Our experience is limited to this world. Jesus is the inhabitant of heaven; he has entered on an immortal life, and is clothed with power, such as is unknown amongst men, — a power felt through heaven and earth, — a power which is one day to be displayed in the most wonderful effects. . . . . .

"That God has invested his Son with authority over the whole human race, to accomplish the most benevolent ends, is not to be wondered at as something unprecedented, and unlike every thing we see in the course of providence. This relation of Jesus Christ to the human race is not altogether without example. On the contrary, it is God's common method to connect one being with others for the sake of imparting to them the blessings we need. All the good which we have received has flowed to us, not immediately from the Father, but from other beings, who have received power, authority, wisdom, and love from God, that they might be sources of good to us and all around us. . . . . .

"It may be objected to the views which have now been given as to the power to which Christ is exalted for human salvation, that we do not see such sensible effects as might be expected from this universal sovereign. To this I answer, that a being so far exalted above us must have innumerable modes of operation which we cannot discern or comprehend. His agency may continually be mingled with human events, and yet we not discern it. No being acts, if I may use the words, with so much silence and secrecy as the Infinite Father. He is ever present, and ever operating, and yet we see him not, we hear him not; and his Son Jesus Christ, who is the image of his power as well as of all his perfections, may act in the same unseen, yet ef-

ficacious, manner. The narrowness of our vision is sufficient to account for our not distinguishing more sensibly the operation of Jesus Christ in human affairs. . . . . .

" The agency of Christ is at present silent and concealed; but the time is approaching, when the veil which conceals our Lord will be removed, when he will be revealed, with the angels who now obey him, in the glory of the Father, when his power will be felt through the regions of the dead, when all who have lived will receive new life at his hands, and when all will surround his judgment-seat. Then will be seen, and felt, and acknowledged by all, the exalted authority of Jesus Christ. . . . . .

" At that day men will be as angels, and will be associated in a measure with angels; and then will be understood that striking language of Paul, that it is the purpose of God to ' gather together in one all things in Christ.' "

1811. CHRIST'S RELATIONS TO THE CHURCH. " By his Church our Saviour does not mean a party, bearing the name of a human leader, distinguished by a form or an opinion, and, on the ground of this distinction, denying the name or character of Christians to all but themselves. He means by it the body of his friends and followers, *who truly imbibe his spirit*, no matter by what name they are called, in what house they worship, by what peculiarities of mode and opinion they are distinguished, under what sky they live, or what language they speak. These are the true church, — men made better, made holy, virtuous, by his religion, — men who, hoping in his promises, keep his commands.

" Ever since Christ's church was established, such a unity has existed, such characters have been formed by the gospel; and this influence it will exert through all ages. As we have said, we have reason to suppose, from what has been experienced, that great changes will take place in the

present state of Christianity; and the time is, perhaps, coming, when all our present sects will live only in history. But the influences of the gospel will not therefore cease; the church will not die with the sects into which it is broken. On the contrary, we may hope that the vine of God will flourish more, when these branches are lopped off which exhaust its strength and bear little fruit. Men will then learn that Christianity is designed for practice, and not for contention; ceasing to censure others, they will aim to reform themselves. The simple gospel, divested of human addition, no longer disfigured by absurd explanation, will be the centre and bond of union to the world. The name of *Christian* will absorb all other names; and the spirit of love to God and man will take the place of unhallowed zeal and bitter contention. Human churches, human establishments, — the effects and monuments of folly and ambition, — will fall. But the church of Christ — which is another name for piety, goodness, righteousness, peace, and love — shall endure for ever. . . . . .

" The recovery of men to holiness, by the diffusion of a holy doctrine, was not one of the inferior objects of Christ's mission, not an accidental end, which may fail, and yet his great purpose be accomplished. This was the central work which brought him into the world. Forsaking all other ends, he lived for this, — to unfold, and confirm, and enforce a religion which should fill the whole earth and subsist to the end of time. . . . . .

" It is a delightful and elevating thought, that the Son of God, of whom the Scriptures speak in such magnificent language, has this peculiar interest in the sanctification and recovery of our race; that, after living to teach, and dying to confirm, his truth, he is now clothed with majesty and might, to extend it through the earth. Can that cause fail which has this advocate in heaven; that kingdom be overthrown which this immortal and benignant Sovereign

watches with a constant care? We must never imagine Jesus Christ withdrawn from the support of his church, or indifferent to the holiness and virtue of our race."

SECTION FOURTH.

SOCIETY.

1810. PROVIDENCE MANIFESTED IN THE PROGRESS OF SOCIETY. "We must not suffer the miseries which history brings to view to fill our minds, and to crowd from them the animating conviction of an overruling Providence, which will make light spring up in darkness, and the furious waves subside into peace. We ought to remember, that, whilst society has been so agitated, innumerable individuals have, in all ages, enjoyed peace and security; that, in the family retreat where history never penetrates, the domestic virtues have been cherished, and all the endearments and improvements of social intercourse enjoyed. We ought to remember, that, amidst the convulsions of the world, the cause of truth and religion has ever maintained its ground, and been silently extending its influence; that the race has been progressive; that the light of revelation, which at first faintly gleamed in an obscure corner of the world, is now beaming on many nations; and that treasures of knowledge and wisdom have constantly been accumulating as they have been transmitted from age to age. Let us not, then, waver in the belief, which there is so much to confirm, that there is a wise and almighty providence extended over all the changes of society.

"As the individuals of the human race pass through stages of helplessness, inexperience, and suffering, before they attain the vigor of their powers, so the race itself is destined to pass through its infancy and growth, before it attains to wisdom and happiness. As the individual improves by experience, and gains the best lessons from suf-

fering, so, perhaps, society is to be instructed and ameliorated by calamity. Future ages may look back on the present, and, whilst they shudder at the scenes of confusion and bloodshed which are now exhibited, may be kept from that depravity of manners, that selfish, mercenary spirit, that neglect of Christianity and of education, that pride and ambition, which are the sources of our miseries. But, whatever be the methods of Providence, we may be assured that the interests of virtue and religion will triumph, and with these all the interests of society will be advanced. Nothing is wanting, except the extension of pure principle and pure manners, to make society happy; and without this, all other improvements will be of no avail. But this *will be* effected. . . . . .

"The time is coming when the wicked will be remembered only to instruct and improve, and the miseries of men be remembered only to illustrate the triumphs of goodness and happiness. Let us, then, never faint; but in the darkest period cleave to the cause of righteousness, seek to bless and reform mankind, and exult in the thought that our labors shall not be in vain in the Lord Jesus."

1804. JUSTICE. "It is right that every *individual* should be secured in all enjoyments which consist with *general* enjoyment. An individual in a state of nature would suffer a wrong, if made to experience any unnecessary harm or privation. Thus, before all compact, it appears that individuals have a right to appropriate the useful objects of the world; and social compact is necessary only to establish certain rules or principles according to which those objects may be appropriated to general advantage. These rules or principles form what we term the rights of man; they grow out of that eternal moral truth, which is the fountain of all right, that the *greatest good* should be promoted; they belong to the nature of man, as a being capable of enjoyment,

and dependent for comfort and support on the productions of the earth. It is important thus to consider the foundation of property and of the rights of man, that we may form a correct opinion of that *Justice* which consists in respecting these rights and that property. If the institution of property originates in the general good, if the right of property be nothing more than the right of the individual to enjoy all which is consistent with general good, then *justice is in truth one with benevolence.* It consists in embracing the general welfare, and in revering those rules and principles on which this welfare depends. . . . . .

" Justice differs from mercy, not in its nature, but in the circumstances under which it is exercised. Both justice and mercy have the same object, the general good; but justice is limited to those cases where public good prescribes a clear, precise, and unchanging course of action; while mercy is exercised in circumstances to which no definite rules can be applied, and in which the general good requires that the individual should be left to his own judgment and discretion. Thus justice is something more than that petty honesty which seeks nothing but self, and which is contented with regarding such established principles as cannot be violated without incurring punishment or disgrace. Its whole nature is *impartial, diffusive benevolence.*

" I would further observe, that, if it be the nature of justice to avoid whatever is clearly opposed to our neighbour, it is unjust, in our dealings with others, to desire and seek more than the value of our commodities. Mutual benefit is the very end of trade or commerce. We know, when our neighbour contracts with us, that he expects an equivalent. We know that he makes a transfer of his property for some valuable consideration, and we have no right to offer as an equivalent what we certainly know bears no proportion to the property he transfers. A just man will

never lose sight of the interests of his neighbour. He will not, indeed, feel himself bound to take the same care of another's property as of his own, for this is impracticable. He will suppose that every man, who possesses common understanding, knows best his own interests, and on this ground he will deal with him. But when he certainly knows that his neighbour is injuring himself, that a proposed contract cannot be attended with mutual benefit, he has no right to presume that his neighbour is taking care of himself. As surely as he regards the rights of others, he will feel that he has no right to offer as an equivalent what he knows has no value.

"My friends, believe it, and impress it on your hearts, that justice unconnected with benevolence is not worth possessing. It is the growth of selfishness, and knaves may boast of it. That man, who makes his own private interest supreme, who cares not how much his neighbour suffers, if he may himself be advanced, who can take pleasure in gains which he knows are necessarily connected with the loss and injury of others, who, under pretence of leaving his neighbour to provide for himself, will impose upon him, as an equivalent, what he knows to be worth nothing, — that man may talk of integrity, and hold high his head in a mercenary world, but he knows not the meaning of justice. He never felt that generous regard to right which is of more worth, and confers more happiness, than all the gains of selfishness and iniquity. It is not hard to determine what such a man would choose, if he had no alternative but poverty or injustice. This, my friends, is the test of our character. The principles of that man are worth little, who will not sacrifice all he possesses to principle; and can you expect such sacrifice from the selfish soul, which is willing, yea, happy, that others should fall, if his own interests may be advanced? Beware of selfishness; consider that you can never obtain a right to do injury, that the foundation of all property is general good. . . . . .

"If such be perfect justice, so incorruptible, what reason have we to fear that there is little of this principle, when we see the expedients and precautions which are adopted to prevent men from abusing a trifling trust, from sacrificing the interests of their neighbour to a trifling gain! We carry our own shame on our foreheads. Most of our civil institutions grow out of our corruptions. We cannot live without mutual dependence, and yet we are forced to hedge each other round, to bind and shackle each other, to institute inquiries, and to watch with anxious caution lest we should abuse each other's necessities, and take advantage of trust to betray it. If men were what men should be, we should feel our property as safe in the hands of others as in our own. We should find in every man a guardian, instead of an invader, of our rights. We should lay open our possessions. We should want no better security than our neighbour's word, and no better witness than our neighbour's conscience. Imagination dwells with delight on this state of peaceful, unsuspicious, undisturbed enjoyment. Is it never to be made a reality? . . . . .

"Justice forbids us to borrow what we have no prospect of repaying. When we are reduced to such low circumstances, it is more honorable to beg, to cast ourselves on mercy, than to deceive our neighbour into an opinion of our ability, and thus to rob him of his property. We should never subject ourselves to larger demands than we shall probably be able to answer. We should never use arts that we may obtain larger credit than we deserve. We have no right to borrow when our circumstances are such as, if known, would prevent others from lending. We have no right to borrow that we may run some desperate risk for retrieving a falling fortune. Whenever we have contracted debts, we should be prompt and earnest to discharge them. We should particularly remember the laborer who depends on daily wages for subsistence. The Scriptures tell us that

his hire crieth unto the Lord for vengeance. We should never allow ourselves pleasures and indulgences while our neighbour is complaining for want of what we owe him. Let us consider that nothing belongs to us while we are indebted to another. It is our duty to use the property in our hands as the property of our creditor. He has a right to expect that we be frugal, that we retrench all unnecessary expenses, that we exercise prudence, economy, and regularity, that we avoid all desperate hazards, and labor patiently that we may render him his due. . . . . .

" Power confers no claim, and weakness can impair no right. It is the glorious design of civil institutions to concentre public strength in support of individual right, to guard the property of the feeble by the majesty of the state. But no government can fully accomplish the ends of its institution. No outward penalties can supply the place of an inward principle of justice. They who have power can always find some opportunity of abusing it. Justice forbids us to violate the possessions of those who depend upon us, and who therefore dare not provoke our displeasure by the assertion of their rights. It forbids us to abuse any circumstance which puts our neighbour in our power, or to extort his consent to injurious measures, or to reduce him to the necessity of sacrificing his property, by threatening him with evils to which we are able to expose him. . . . . .

" Justice brands as robbery the abuse of power for suppressing the claims of the feeble, or alarming the fears of the dependent. It recommends the weak and poor to our protection. It renders the defenceless hovel of poverty as sacred as the palace of affluence. It makes the cause of the oppressed our own, and animates us with generous zeal to rescue the helpless from the grasp of the rapacious. . . . . .

" Justice, being sincere regard to right, requires us to disapprove and to discourage the imperious. It requires

us at all times to throw our whole weight into the scale of the injured. It forbids us to connive at imposition, to furnish others with the means or temptations to fraud or violence, to reduce them to dishonesty, that we may be benefited. It calls us to frown on the base, to separate ourselves from their fellowship, to keep none of their counsels, to bring their designs to light, and to crush their schemes of dishonesty. Men are prone to stoop to successful villany. They seem to forget the steps by which wicked men have ascended to eminence. They forget the tears of the oppressed, the necessities of the plundered, the hopeless poverty of the fatherless and widow. But justice is inflexible. It can give no countenance to extortion and dishonesty. It looks through the false splendor with which the wicked are surrounded, and sees and detests their baseness. No threats, no seductions, can bend the just man to smile on the knave and the robber. He takes a firm, elevated ground. He dares to be poor himself; and he dares to remember the oppressions and injuries of the great. . . . . .

"A just man appeals from the laws of the land to the dictates of conscience. He does not cling to every shadow of right. He does not take advantage of ambiguity of expression, to beat down what he knows to be a substantial claim. He does not abuse the ignorance of his neighbour, and uphold, by legal subtleties, an unfounded demand. He does not press even his undoubted rights too close, lest he should border upon injustice. He reverences the laws as they are the guardians of right. He holds nothing merely because the laws do not take it away. He seizes nothing merely because the laws do not prohibit it. He considers that laws do not create right, that there are eternal principles of truth and rectitude to which all civil laws must be reduced as their standard; and to the principle written by God on the heart, and confirmed in the Holy Scriptures, he refers all his actions which relate to the property of others."

1807. Benevolence united with wisdom. "I am sensible, my friends, that I am cautioning you against an excess to which you are not very much exposed. It is not the fault of the present day, that men, in their zeal for others, forget themselves. We hear of romance, but there is very little of romantic benevolence in the world. The great difficulty is to draw men out of themselves; and when it is so hard to persuade them to take a few steps beyond their narrow circle, there seems little reason for cautioning them against running too far and hurrying too fast from this narrow point. But to those who have caught some of the light and life of Christian goodness, whose hearts go abroad and embrace the family of their Father in Heaven, it may not be useless to suggest, that the influence of your characters very much depends on your uniting with the amiableness of the dove the wisdom of the serpent. Let men see that your kindness is not a rash, sudden, ungoverned feeling, but a rational, calm, steady principle, — an image of Divine benevolence, which is regular, wise, and marked by order, harmony, and extensive views in all its operations. Let them see that your benevolence is not a transitory emotion, which is excited by some present object, and which sacrifices future good and future means of usefulness to accomplish some pleasing end immediately in its view; but teach them that Christian benevolence, with all its ardor, is yet consistent with the highest prudence, that it examines its objects with calmness, anticipates consequences, acts on a wide and generous scale."

1809. Peace on earth. "Peace is a state of harmony between beings who have one interest, are alive to the same pleasures and pains, and participate in each other's views and feelings. Our Saviour, in his last prayer for his disciples, has taught us what he meant by the peace which he came to establish on earth, when he expresses again and

again this desire, that they might 'be *one*, even as he and the Father were one.'

"By this peace we are not to understand merely that state of things in which men abstain from mutual injury. It is that mutual affection which prompts us to every sacrifice for one another's good, and renders each happy to do and to suffer for his friend. Peace is sometimes spoken of as a negative, inactive state. But in the gospel it expresses something very different, — the union of good hearts, which are inflamed with the best sentiments, which are attracted by congeniality, and which conspire to act for the common welfare. This peace is not the profession of lips, but living concord.

"The end for which Jesus Christ came was to convert men into real friends, to make them objects of each other's attachment, to give them a common feeling and a common interest. He came to operate on the spirit, to produce inward effects, to implant a principle of true love, to fit men for the most endearing relations. He came to adorn the human character, to strip it of every thing fierce and repulsive, to make it attractive, to shed round it the mild lustre of benevolence. He came to take from men's hands the implements of war, and to open their arms to embrace one another. He came to dispel distrust, suspicion, and jealousy, to render man worthy of the confidence of his brother, to bring men to that exalted state in which they will lay bare their whole souls without fear. He came to draw men off from separate interests, and to win them to objects in which all may combine, to which all may lend their aid, and which will thus form the means of affectionate intercourse. He came to soften insensibility, to make many hearts beat in unison, to excite the tenderest concern for each individual's welfare, and the most generous, disinterested labors for the common good. He came to root out envy, to give every person an interest in the ex-

cellence of others, to make us look with delight on all promises of goodness, to rouse us to be helpers of each other's purity and perfection, to teach us to feel that the progress of our brethren is our own. He came to form such a union amongst men as would lead them to pour freely from their hearts the noblest views and feelings, and thus become the means of enkindling every grace and virtue, and mutual sources of love and wisdom. He came, in a word, so to bind us together that we should count nothing material or spiritual our own, but hold all things in common, and give all to the general well-being."

1812. PARTY SPIRIT. "I wish to address you at this time on the subject of party spirit, the great instrument by which free states are divided and destroyed. As this spirit may be considered the sin of our nation, and as it is the spring of so many crimes, we may with great propriety consider it on this day, which is designed to produce national humility and reformation. . . . . .

"Party spirit is by no means the same thing with warm attachment to a party, and with asserting with spirit its principles. It is very possible to be connected with a party, and yet to escape the contagion of party spirit. We shall be most unjust, if we ascribe this spirit to all who, from political connections, engage in political contests. We are possessed by this bad spirit, not when we join a party, but when we prefer its interests to the good of the state; when we propose, as our end, to keep our party in power, and are indifferent to the character of the men by whom this end is promoted; when, having taken our side, we determine to keep it, because we will not acknowledge that we have erred, and because our advancement or interests are involved in the success of our party. This is party spirit, — the offspring of selfishness, passion, pride, jealousy, and love of distinction; — a spirit which is willing to sacrifice

the whole to a part, which hypocritically pretends devotion to the public good for the mere purpose of getting or keeping influence, which will injure the state rather than make concessions to opponents, or renounce principles which it has pledged itself to support. Such is party spirit, the worst enemy of free governments, the enemy from which we have every thing to fear, — which has already laid its polluting and destroying hand on our best institutions, and has made the sacred fabric of the state tremble to its foundation. . . . . .

" Party spirit corrupts the individual. There is no passion which has such influence in perverting the judgment and darkening the understanding. A slight observation will teach you that the man who devotes himself to the interests of his party loses all independence of mind. Let his party do what it may, he sees nothing wrong in their measures, or at least he vindicates them as if satisfied of their correctness. He takes his tone from his leaders, and judges as he is told to judge. In vain are the principles and falsehoods of his party exposed. Too proud to retract, and pledged to support the cause, he flies to artful evasion or clamorous assertion, and continues to justify gross iniquity. You may look to any man for fairness of mind and sensibility to truth, rather than to a confirmed partisan. He gives up his reason, his dignity as a rational being, to his party. Party spirit has as fatal effects on the heart as on the understanding. The man who surrenders himself to the interests of his party becomes a malignant man. Irritation becomes the habit of his mind. He cannot think of his opponents without animosity. He cannot speak of them without bitterness. He condemns all they do, believes all the crimes which are imputed to them, and circulates, if he does not magnify, calumnious rumors. He watches for their halting, exults in their vices, and looks unmoved on their miseries. Am I wrong in saying that nothing hardens

the heart, nothing sheds malignant poison through the feelings, more than party spirit? Look anywhere for candor, generosity, and tenderness, rather than to the breast of a partisan. Where this spirit prevails in a community, fellow-citizens learn to hate each other more than they hate a foreign foe, and thus become inflamed and ripe for civil convulsions.

"From what has been said, you will easily comprehend the next evil of party spirit, when it prevails in a state. It reconciles the people and their rulers to the most criminal practices. The sense of right is gradually impaired, and at length borne down, by the desire of exalting the party. The end sanctifies the means. The doctrine is almost explicitly asserted, that moral principle is not to be strictly applied to political movements. The question is not, Are measures righteous? — but, Will they build up the party? Intrigue and stratagem are called policy. To lie, to mutilate the truth, to deceive the ignorant, to pour out slander on good men, — these become things of course, so common as to be expected, so common that the moral sensibility is at length blunted, and we hear of them without indignation. The partisan is insensibly goaded and incited by numbers into measures from which his better principles would at first have recoiled. So many share his guilt, that his own part of the burden seems light. At length he loses the feeling of responsibility for his political conduct, and there is nothing too base which you have not to fear from him, if his party may be advanced by it.

"Another tremendous evil attending the prevalence of party spirit is this: the door of honor and office is thrown open to the worst men in the community. The only question respecting the candidate for office is, Can he serve the party? It is of little importance that he is abhorred by the good, and despised even by his own associates, that he is known to be unprincipled, that none will trust the smallest

part of their property to his hands. Will he serve the cause? is the only question. If with want of principle he combines great cunning, — a combination not uncommon, — he is the very man the party want. His vice is his recommendation. Power and honor are thrown into his polluted hands. Base as he is, he is adorned with the badges of office, the marks of public confidence; and though unfaithful in every thing, he is very seldom unfaithful to the party which raised him to power. He never forgets to whom he owes his elevation, and the patronage and influence of his station are all employed to throw office and wealth into the hands of his confederates. Office is made a bribe. Exclusive privileges are granted to the party. New laws are made, ancient usages abolished, ancient institutions thrown down, to confirm the dominant party. My friends, you can easily conceive the effect on public morals, when the worst men have the easiest access to power, when the glare of station is thrown around the unprincipled, when character has ceased to be a qualification for public confidence. You can easily conceive the instability, and the ruinous influence, of that government which is administered for the very purpose of giving strength to a faction, and crushing the falling party. . . . . .

" When party spirit has reached this tremendous height, when it wields the power of the state, I need not tell you that liberty is in effect lost. The name of liberty may, indeed, ring through the land; but who is free? The very adherents of the dominant party are in bondage. The vengeance of the party hangs over the individual who dares to think or act for himself. The leaders issue laws, dictate the measures, say who shall be chosen, and select the arts and falsehoods which will best suit the occasion. The obedient partisan opens his lips to receive the invented lie, and puts his hands to the vile task which is assigned him. In such a state of things public sentiment is a name; — the

voice of a few leaders alone is heard and obeyed. If the dominant party are in chains, what can we hope for the minority? No pains are spared to strip them of their just and lawful influence in the state. Their rights are trampled under foot. They are divided, broken into fragments, that they may exert no joint power for counteracting their adversaries. Do they proclaim their wrongs, they are menaced. Freedom of speech is a crime, is treason; opposition to the reigning faith is rebellion. Passive obedience is preached to them by the very men who rose to power by proclaiming liberty. The venerable patriot hears himself denounced by men who hate him because he knows their baseness, and who are fattening on the spoils of that country for which he toiled and bled. Thus *despotism in effect* grows out of party spirit, and *despotism in form*, in its true and undisguised shape, is not slow to follow."

1810 (*April* 5, *Day of Public Fast*). THE MILITARY DESPOTISM OF FRANCE. "Am I asked, what there is so peculiar in our times? I answer: — In the very heart of Europe, in the centre of the civilized world, a new power has suddenly arisen on the ruins of old institutions, peculiar in its character, and most ruinous in its influence. We there see a nation, which, from its situation, its fertility, and population, has always held a commanding rank in Europe, suddenly casting off the form of government, the laws, the habits, the spirit, by which it was assimilated to surrounding nations, and by which it gave to them the power of restraining it; and all at once assuming a new form, and erecting a new government, free in name and profession, but holding at its absolute disposal the property and life of every subject, and directing all its energies to the subjugation of foreign countries. We see the supreme power of this nation passing in rapid succession from one hand to another. But its object never changes. We see it dividing and corrupting by its arts,

and then overwhelming by its arms, the nations which surround it. We see one end steadily kept in view, — the creation of an irresistible military power. For this end, we see every man, in the prime of life, subjected to military service. We see military talent everywhere excited, and by every means rewarded. The arts of life, agriculture, commerce, all are of secondary value. In short, we see a mighty nation sacrificing every blessing in the prosecution of an unprincipled attempt at universal conquest.

" The result you well know. The surrounding nations, unprepared for this new conflict, and absolutely incapacitated by their old habits and institutions to meet this new power on equal terms, have fallen in melancholy succession ; and each, as it has fallen, has swelled by its plunder the power and rapacity of its conquerors. We now behold this nation triumphant over Continental Europe. Its armies are immensely numerous; yet the number is not the circumstance which renders them most formidable. These armies have been trained to conquest by the most perfect discipline. At their head are generals who have risen only by military merit. They are habituated to victory, and their enemies are habituated to defeat.

" All this immense power is now centred in one hand, wielded by one mind, — a mind formed in scenes of revolution and blood, — a mind most vigorous and capacious, but whose capacity is filled with plans of dominion and devastation. It has not room for one thought of mercy. The personal character of Napoleon is of itself sufficient to inspire the gloomiest forebodings. But in addition to his lust for power, he is almost impelled by the necessity of his circumstances to carry on the bloody work of conquest. His immense armies, the only foundations of his empire, must be supported. Impoverished France, however, cannot give them support. They must therefore live on the spoils of other nations. But the nations which they suc-

cessively spoil, and whose industry and arts they extinguish, cannot long sustain them. Hence they must pour themselves into new regions. Hence plunder, devastation, and new conquests are not merely the outrages of wanton barbarity; they are essential even to the existence of this tremendous power.

"What overwhelming, disheartening prospects are these! In the midst of Christendom, this most sanguinary power has reared its head, and holds the world in defiance; and now, let me ask, how are we impressed in these dark, disastrous times? Here is every form of misery. We are called to sympathize with fallen greatness, with descendants of ancient sovereigns, hurled from their thrones, and cast out to contempt; and if these do not move us, our sympathy is demanded by a wretched peasantry, driven from their humble roofs, and abandoned to hunger and unsheltered poverty. The decaying city, the desolated country, the weeping widow, the forsaken orphan, call on us for our tears. Nations, broken in spirit, yet forced to smother their sorrows, call on us, with a silent eloquence, to feel for their wrongs; and how are we moved by these scenes of ruin, horror, and alarm? Does there not, my friends, prevail among us a cold indifference, as if all this were nothing to us, as if no tie of brotherhood bound us to these sufferers? Are we not prone to follow the authors of this ruin with an admiration of their power and success, which almost represses our abhorrence of their unsparing cruelty?

"But we are not merely insensible to the calamities of other nations. There is a still stranger insensibility to our own dangers. We seem determined to believe that this storm will spend all its force at a distance. The idea, that *we* are marked out as victims of this all-destroying despotism, *that our turn is to come and perhaps is near*, — this idea strikes on most minds as a fiction. Our own deep interest in the present conflict is unfelt even by some who feel as they ought for other nations.

"It is asked, What has a nation so distant as America to fear from the power of France? I answer: — The history of all ages teaches us, all our knowledge of human nature teaches us, *that a nation of vast and unrivalled power is to be feared by all the world.* Even had France attained her present greatness under a long established government, without any of the habits which the Revolution has formed, the world ought to view her with trembling jealousy. What nation ever enjoyed such power without abusing it? But France is not a common nation. We must not apply to her common rules. Conquest is her trade, her business, her recreation. The lust of power is the very vital principle of this new nation. Her strength is drained out to supply her armies; — her talents are exhausted in preparing schemes of wider domination. WAR, WAR is the solemn note which resounds through every department of state. And is such a nation to be viewed with indifference, with unconcern? Have *we* nothing to fear, because *an ocean rolls between us*?

Will it be said that the conqueror has too much work at home to care for America? He has indeed work at home; but, unhappily for this country, that work ever brings *us* to his view. There is one work, one object, which is ever present to the mind of Napoleon. It mingles with all his thoughts. It is his dream by night, his care by day. He did not forget it on the shores of the Baltic, or the banks of the Danube. *The ruin of England* is the first, the most settled purpose of his heart. That nation is the only barrier to his ambition. In the opulence, the energy, the public spirit, the liberty of England, he sees the only obstacles to universal dominion. England once fallen, and the civilized world lies at his feet. England erect, and there is one asylum for virtue, magnanimity, freedom; one spark which may set the world on fire; one nation to encourage the disaffected, — to hold up to the oppressed the standard of re-

volt. England, therefore, is the great object of the hostile fury of the French emperor. England is the great end of his plans; and his plans of course embrace all nations which come in contact with England; which love or hate her, which can give her support, or contribute to her downfall.

"*We*, then, we may be assured, are not overlooked by Napoleon. We are a nation sprung from England. We have received from her our laws, and many of our institutions. We speak her language, and in her language we dare to express the indignation which she feels at oppression. Besides, we have other ties which connect us with England. We are a commercial people, commercial by habit, commercial by our very situation. But no nation can be commercial without maintaining some connection with England, — without having many common interests with her, — without strengthening the foundations of her greatness. England is the great emporium of the world; and the conqueror knows that it is only by extinguishing the commerce of the world, by bringing every commercial nation to bear his yoke, that he can fix a mortal wound on England. Besides, we are the neighbours of some of the most valuable English colonies, and can exert an important influence on those channels of her commerce, those sources of her opulence.

"Can we, then, suppose that the ambitious, the keen-sighted Napoleon overlooks *us* in his scheme of universal conquest; that he wants nothing of us, and is content that we should prosper and be at peace, because we are so distant from his throne? Has he not already told us that we must embark in his cause? Has he not himself declared war for us against England?

"Will it be said, he wants not to conquer us, but only wishes us to be his allies? *Allies of France!* Is there a man who does not shudder at the thought? Is there one

who would not rather struggle nobly, and perish under her open enmity, than be crushed by the embrace of her friendship, — *her alliance?* . . . . .

"Will it be said that these evils are *political* evils, and that it is not the province of a minister of religion to concern himself with temporal affairs? Did I think, my friends, that only political evils were to be dreaded, — did I believe that *the minds*, *the character*, *the morals*, *the religion*, of our nation would remain untouched, — did I see in French domination nothing but the loss of your wealth, your luxuries, your splendor, — could I hope that it would leave unsullied your purity of faith and manners, — I would be silent. But religion and virtue, as well as liberty and opulence, wither under the power of France. The French Revolution was founded in infidelity, impiety, and atheism. This is the spirit of her chiefs, her most distinguished men; and this spirit she breathes, wherever she has influence. It is the most unhappy effect of French domination, that it degrades the human character to the lowest point. No manly virtues grow under this baleful, malignant star. France begins her conquests by corruption, by venality, by bribes; and where she succeeds, her deadly policy secures her from commotion by quenching all those generous sentiments which produce revolt under oppression. The conqueror thinks his work not half finished until *the mind is conquered*, its energy broken, its feeling for the public welfare subdued. Such are the effects of subjection to France, or, what is the same thing, of *alliance* with her; and when we consider how much this subjection is desired by Napoleon, when we consider the power and the arts which he can combine for effecting his wishes and purposes, what reason have we to tremble!

"It may be asked, whether I intend by these remarks to represent our country as in a hopeless state. No, my friends. I have held up the *danger* of our country in all

its magnitude, only that I may in my humble measure excite that spirit which is necessary, and which by the blessing of Providence may be effectual, to avert it. Alarming as our condition is, there does appear to me to be one method of safety, and only one: — *As a people, we must be brought to see and to feel our danger; we must be excited to a public spirit, an energy, a magnanimity, proportioned to the solemnity of the times in which we are called to act.* If I may be permitted, I would say to the upright, the disinterested, the enlightened friends of their country, that the times demand new and peculiar exertions. In the present state of the world, there is, under God, but one hope of a people; and that is, their own exalted virtue. This, therefore, should be your object and labor, — to fix the understandings of the people on the calamities that are approaching them; to enlighten the public mind; to improve our moral feelings; to breathe around you an elevated spirit; to fortify as many hearts as possible with the generous purpose to do all which men can do for the preservation of their country. You should labor, not to excite a temporary paroxysm, for the danger is not to be repelled by a few impassioned efforts. We want a calm and solemn apprehension fixed in every mind, that we have every thing at stake, — that great sacrifices are to be expected, but that the evils are so tremendous as to justify and require every sacrifice. We want to have a general impression made of the character, spirit, designs, power, and acts of France; — of the unparalleled wretchedness, the political, moral, and religious debasement, attendant on union with her, or on subjection to her power. To effect this end, I have said that new exertions should be made. The common vehicles of political information have done, and may do, much, but cannot do all which is required. Authentic publications *in the names* of our wisest, purest, most venerated citizens should be spread abroad, containing the plain, unexaggerated, uncolored history of the revolution and domination of France.

"It may be said that the people have all the evidence on this subject already communicated to them. I fear that many have not received sufficiently distinct and connected information from sources on which they rely; and I am confident that many who know the truth need to have the convictions of their understandings converted into active principles, into convictions of the heart. I fear there are many who are blinded to the true character of the conqueror of Europe, by the splendor of his victories; many who attach to him the noble qualities which have been displayed by other heroes, and who repose a secret hope in his *clemency*. They ought to know, and they might know, that he has risen to power in a revolution which has had a peculiar influence in hardening the heart; that his character is unillumined by one ray of beneficence; that he is dark, vindictive, unrelenting; that no man loves him, that he cares for no man's love; that he asks only to be feared, and that fear and horror are the only sentiments he ought to inspire.

"I fear there are many who attach ideas of *happiness* and glory to France, because they hear of the conquests of French armies; and I fear that this impression reconciles them to the thought of union with her. They might know, and they ought to know, *that France is drinking, even to the dregs, that cup of sorrow which she has mingled for other nations.* They should be taught that she is most degraded in her *moral* and *religious* condition, and wretchedly impoverished; that her agriculture, her manufactures, her commercial cities, are falling to decay; that she is ground with oppressive taxes, most oppressively collected; that her youth are torn from their families to fill up the constant ravages which war and disease are making in her armies; that, with all her sufferings, she is not permitted the poor privilege of complaining; that her cities, villages, and houses are thronged with spies, to catch and report the murmurs of disaffection. In a word, the people might and should be taught,

that social confidence, public spirit, enterprise, cheerful industry, and moral and religious excellence have almost forsaken that unhappy country.

"On these topics, and on many others which would illustrate the character and tendency of the French domination, might not conviction be carried to some minds at least, and might not many sluggish minds be awakened, if persevering, steady efforts were made by men whose characters would be pledges of their veracity and disinterestedness? Sudden effects might not be produced, and perhaps sudden effects are not to be desired. We do not want a temporary, evanescent ardor, excited for partial purposes and local objects. We want a rational conviction of their great danger fastened on the people, and a steady and generous purpose to resist it by every means which Providence has put within their power. Let me entreat all who are interested in this great object, the improvement and elevation of public sentiment, to adhere to such means only as are worthy that great end; to suppress and condemn appeals to unworthy passions, misrepresentation, and that abuse which depraves public taste and sentiment, and makes a man of a pure mind ashamed of the cause which he feels himself bound to support. Let me also urge you to check the feelings and the expressions of malignity and revenge. Curses, denunciations, and angry invectives are not the language of that spirit to which I look for the safety of our country. We ought to know that the *malignant passions* of a people are among the powerful instruments by which the enemy binds them to his yoke. The patriotism which we need is a benevolent, generous, forbearing spirit; too much engrossed with the public welfare to be stung by personal opposition; calm and patient in exhibiting the truth, and tolerant towards those who cannot, or who will not, receive it. Let me repeat it; the end we should propose, the elevation of public sentiment and feeling, is not to be secured

by violence or passion, but by *truth* from the hearts and lips and pens of men whose lives and characters give it energy.

"But as the most effectual method of exalting the views, purposes, and character of our nation, let me entreat you who are lovers of your country to labor with all your power *to diffuse the faith and practice of the gospel of Christ.* The prevalence of true Christianity is the best defence of a nation, especially at this solemn and eventful period. It will secure to us the blessing of Almighty God; and it will operate more powerfully than any other cause in making us recoil from the embrace of France. No greater repugnance can be conceived than what subsists between the mild, humane, peaceful, righteous, and devout spirit of the gospel, and the impious, aspiring, and rapacious spirit of this new nation. Christianity will, indeed, exclude from our breasts all feelings of ill-will, malice, and revenge towards France and her sovereign; for these are feelings which it never tolerates. But it will inspire a holy abhorrence of her spirit and designs, and will make us shudder at the thought of sinking under her power, or aiding her success.

"But it becomes us to promote Christianity, not only because it will *help to save* our country. We should cherish and diffuse it, because it will be a refuge and consolation, *even should our country fall;* a support which the oppressor cannot take from us. The sincere Christian is not comfortless, even in the darkest and most degenerate times. He knows that oppressive power is but for a moment; and his benevolence is animated by the promise of God, that, even in this world, this scene of cruelty and wretchedness, there will yet be enjoyed the reign of peace, of truth, and holiness under the benignant Saviour."

EXTRACTS FROM A SERMON PREACHED IN BOSTON, JULY 23, 1812, THE DAY OF THE PUBLIC FAST APPOINTED BY

THE EXECUTIVE OF THE COMMONWEALTH OF MASSACHUSETTS, IN CONSEQUENCE OF THE DECLARATION OF WAR AGAINST GREAT BRITAIN. "That we have received no injuries from the nation we have selected as our enemy I do not say; but when I consider the conduct of our own government in relation to the two belligerents, — the partiality and timid submission they have expressed towards the one, the cause of suspicion they have given to the other, — and the spirit in which they have sought reparation from England, I am unable to justify the war in which we have engaged. To render the war justifiable, it is not enough that we have received injuries; — we must ask ourselves, Have *we* done our duty to the nation of which we complain? have we taken and kept a strictly impartial position towards her and her enemy? have we not submitted to outrages from her enemy by which he has acquired advantages in the war? have we sought reparation of injuries in a truly pacific spirit? have we insisted only on undoubted rights? have we demanded no unreasonable concessions? These questions must be answered before we decide on the character of the war, and I fear the answer must be against us. . . . . If we have rushed into it when we might have avoided it by an impartial and pacific course, then we have wantonly and by our own fault drawn on ourselves its privations and calamities. Our enemy may, indeed, divide the guilt with us; but on ourselves, as truly as on our enemy, falls the heavy guilt of spreading tumult, slaughter, and misery through the family of God.

"If on the ground of right and justice this war cannot be defended, what shall we say when we come to consider its expediency, its effects on ourselves and the world? It is a war fraught with ruin to our property, our morals, our religion, our independence, our dearest rights, — whilst its influence on other nations, on the common cause of humanity, is most unhappy. . . . . .

"This war is a death-blow to our commerce. The ocean, which nature has spread before us as the field of our enterprise and activity, and from which we have reaped the harvest of our prosperity, is, in effect, forbidden us. Our ships and superfluous produce are to perish on our hands, — our capital to waste away in unproductive inactivity, — our intercourse with all foreign nations is broken off, and the nation with which we sustained the most profitable intercourse is our foe. Need I tell you the distress which this war must spread through the commercial classes of society, and among all whose occupations are connected with commerce? How many are there from whom the hard earnings of years are to be wrested by this war, whose active pursuits and cheering prospects of future comfort are exchanged for discouragement, solicitude, and approaching want!

"In addition to this, as our resources are decreasing, the public burdens are growing heavier; and government, after paralyzing our industry and closing the channels of our wealth, are about to call on us for new contributions to support the war under which we are sinking. And, to fill up the measure of injury, we are told that this war, so fatal to commerce, so dreaded by the friends of commerce, is carried on for its protection. We are required to believe, that restriction and war, the measures which have drained away the life-blood of our prosperity, are designed to secure our rights on the ocean.

"But loss of property is a small evil attending this war, — its effect on our *character* cannot be calculated. I need not tell you the moral influence of a war which is bringing to a gloomy pause the activity of the community, — which is to fill our streets with laborers destitute of employment, — which is to reduce our young men to idleness, — which will compel a large portion of the community to esteem their own government their worst enemy. Regular industry is the parent of sobriety, and gives strength to all

the virtues. A community must be corrupted in proportion as idleness, discontent, and want prevail. We have reason to fear that these temptations will prove too strong for the virtue of common minds, — that, with the decline of commerce, the sense of honor and uprightness in pecuniary transactions will decline, — that fair dealing will be succeeded by fraud, — that civil laws will be treated with contempt, — that habits of dissoluteness and intemperance, already too common, will be awfully multiplied, — that our young men, thrown out of employment and having no field for their restless activity and ardent hopes, will give themselves up to lawless pleasure or immoral pursuits.

"Let me here mention one pursuit which this war will encourage, and which will operate very unhappily on our character. I have said that the ocean will be abandoned. I mistake; — the merchant-vessel will indeed forsake it, but the privateer will take her place. The ocean is no longer to be the field of useful and honest enterprise. We are no longer to traverse it, that we may scatter through the world the bounties of Providence. Henceforth plunder, — plunder is our only object. We are to issue from our ports, not to meet the armed ship of our enemy, — not to break her naval power, — not to wage a war for public purposes; but we shall go forth to meet the defenceless private merchant, and, with our sword at his breast, we are to demand his property, and to enrich ourselves with his spoils. This pursuit is, indeed, allowed by the law of nations; but Christians, and the friends to public morals, must dread and abhor it, as peculiarly calculated to stamp on a people the character of rapacity and hardness of heart. Yet this is the pursuit, this the character, in which Americans are henceforth to be found on the ocean.

"But all the ruinous effects of this war are not yet unfolded. To see it in its true character, we must consider *against what nation it is waged*, and *with what nation it is*

connecting us. We have selected for our enemy the nation from which we sprang, and which has long afforded and still offers us a friendly and profitable intercourse, — a nation which has been for ages the stronghold of Protestant Christianity, — which everywhere exhibits temples of religion, institutions of benevolence, nurseries of science, the aids and means of human improvement, — a nation which, with all the corruptions of her government, still enjoys many of the best blessings of civil liberty, and which is now contending for her own independence, and for the independence of other nations, against the oppressor of mankind. When I view my country taking part with the oppressor against that nation which has alone arrested his proud career of victory, — which is now spreading her shield over desolated Portugal and Spain, — which is the chief hope of the civilized world, — I blush, — I mourn. We are linking ourselves with the acknowledged enemy of mankind, — with a government..... which has left not a vestige of liberty where it has extended its blasting sway, — which is at this moment ravaging nations that are chargeable with no crime but hatred of a foreign yoke. Into contact and communion with this bloody nation we are brought by this war, — and what can we gain by building up its power? On this subject too much plainness cannot be used. Let our government know that we deem alliance with France the worst of evils, threatening at once our morals, our liberty, and our religion."*

* The reader who wishes to learn more fully Mr. Channing's views at this eventful period is referred to the remarks on the "Duties of the Citizen in Times of Trial and Danger." Works, Vol. V., pp. 411 - 421.

CHAPTER III.

THE UNITARIAN CONTROVERSY.

Events were now about to summon Mr. Channing from the quiet scenes in which he was earnestly seeking a religious life, to take an active though unwilling part in the Unitarian controversy ; and any one who wishes to understand aright his relations to this movement should cast a glance backward, and note the progress of the different influences which then met to intermingle in unpleasant but inevitable conflict. If with a catholic and not sectarian temper we survey the ecclesiastical history of New England, we cannot fail to see, that in this commotion of the spiritual world, as in those which disturb the atmosphere, the elements were but seeking equilibrium, and that modes of thought and feeling which at first seem to run most counter to each other were really different cloud-currents of one storm. Certainly the candid of all parties must admit, that, by means of this agitation, the heaven of piety has become more clear, the air of thought more fresh, the earth of charity more green.

From the middle of the last century onwards, three distinct tendencies may be traced in the minds of the Christians of this country, and, indeed, of Europe also. The first is Spiritualism, devoutly longing for a near communion with the Infinite Being and the Heavenly

world, manifesting itself in various forms of enthusiasm, and desiring universal sanctification. The second is Philanthropy, demanding a thorough application of the law of love to all the actual relations and practical concerns of life, and animating men to an unprecedented zeal in moral and social reforms. The third is Free Inquiry, seeking a harmony between religion, philosophy, and experience, — between revelation, reason, and common-sense, — and aiming to give such a view of man's destiny upon earth as shall do justice to nature, to history, and to Divine Order. With what was good in each of these tendencies Mr. Channing sympathized and coöperated, while from the extravagances of each he sought to guard himself and others ; and the sincere student of his writings cannot but observe with admiration the calm consistency with which he twined his threefold cord of existence. He was from original impulse, by method, and in action, complex, and not simple, always reconciling differences by a living synthesis, averse to every kind of partisanship, and each year becoming more liberal, various, expansive, well balanced. The appropriate motto of his life is HOLINESS, TRUTH, HUMANITY.

Extracts from letters, manuscripts, and publications at this period will sufficiently indicate Mr. Channing's position. They are suitably introduced by one in which, at the very close of his career, he has himself reviewed the way whereby Providence had led him up to peace.

"*February*, 1840.

"I read your communication with much sympathy. Indeed, it carried me back to the earlier stages of my own

religious history. Not that I have ever suffered as you have done; but no person can think on the subject of religion without encountering difficulties. Most people owe their freedom from doubts to the absence of thought. As soon as we begin to reflect, we are compelled to call in question a part of our traditionary faith; and the shaking of a part sometimes makes us tremble for the whole. I have spent years of earnest, anxious search for the truth; nor do I repent of my toil. All my toil and solicitude vanish, when I think of the calm faith, the enlargement of views and hopes, in which they have issued.

"You wish to know the history of my mind, but it would fill a volume. My inquiries grew out of the shock given to my moral nature by the popular system of faith which I found prevailing round me in my early years. All my convictions of justice and goodness revolted against the merciless dogmas then commonly taught. I went to the Scriptures, and the blessed light gradually beamed on me from the word of God. I soon learned the great end for which Christ came into the world, — that his first, highest purpose was, not to deliver us from punishment, but from that which deserves punishment, from moral evil, from every impurity of heart and life, from whatever separates us from God; that he came to exert a moral, spiritual influence, by which man was to become a pure, disinterested, excellent being. I soon learned that heaven and hell belong to the mind, that 'the fire and the worm' have their seat in the soul, and that we can attain to the happiness, only by drinking into the spirit, of heaven. In other words, I learned that 'the kingdom of heaven is within us,' — that Christianity is eminently a spiritual system, or intended chiefly to redeem the mind from evil, — that we understand its records only when we interpret them according to this principle. One great truth came out to my apprehension more and more strongly. I felt, I saw, that God is most willing to impart

his 'Holy Spirit,' his strength and light, to every man who labors in earnest to overcome evil, to press forward to that perfection which is the only heaven. You will easily see how these views scattered all the darkness into which I had been plunged by a false, traditionary faith. . . . . .

"I beg you to feel that I sympathize with you in your trials. I can say for your encouragement, that the noblest human beings have sometimes passed through similar ones, and have emerged into the light of a calm and happy faith. Be not anxious to make up your mind in a moment. Be assured that God, the good, the just, cannot demand of you assent to what shocks your best feelings. Inquire as you have opportunity. Seek light from above. Especially be faithful to your convictions of duty, and live up to the light you already have, and I am confident that your difficulties, as far as they are mental, will give way."

TO THE HON. WILLIAM ELLERY.

"*Boston, March*, 1806.

"DEAR AND HONORED SIR, — . . . . . You will see from this that our standard of divinity does not entirely correspond with yours. It is clear that we cannot all be right. The great question, then, offers itself, 'Whether any deviate so far from truth as to be disqualified for receiving the blessings of the gospel, or whether any of the errors of the day necessarily imply a temper opposed to the spirit of the gospel.'

"It seems to be universally granted, that the state of the heart and affections is the great point by which a Christian is to be judged; and that sentiments are no farther important, than as they involve, imply, and cherish a state of heart. Now, can we say of the common errors which prevail in the Christian world, that they cannot coexist with a penitent, a pious, a benevolent spirit? Unless we can prove a clear repugnance between certain sentiments and

the spirit of the gospel, — such a repugnance as forces us to conclude that he who holds these sentiments cannot possess this spirit, — are we authorized to declare the sentiments damnable? An essential doctrine seems to be one which is necessary to the existence of Christian love, and is necessarily implied in this temper. I cannot, therefore, charge a man with damnable heresy, unless I see that his sentiments prove an opposite temper, or, at least, exclude the exercises of Christian love. If this be just, are we not called to be cautious in judging of the character, while we freely criticize the opinions, of others? May we not love the heart, when we think poorly of the head, of our neighbour?"

TO THE HON. WILLIAM ELLERY.

"*Boston, May,* 1806.

"DEAR AND HONORED SIR, — I thank you for your letter, and for the comment which it contains upon our divinity. You complain that our standard is not *particular* enough. But this is the distinguishing feature of our system of liberality. The greater the variety of sentiments with which a system will harmonize, or the fewer its fundamentals, the more worthy it is of liberal minds.

"I conceive these to be the leading principles of modern divinity: — 'Practical righteousness is all in all, and every system which embraces motives enough to a good practice is sufficiently correct. *Love* is the fulfilling of the law and of the gospel. All truth is designed to excite this temper, and to form the habits which flow from it, and this is the only test which we fallible mortals can apply to doctrines. We have reason to think there are *good* men in every denomination. Every sect, therefore, embraces sufficient truth for the great end of Christ, the attainment of everlasting life. It does not follow from this, that all systems are equally valuable; for some may tend more to purify the heart

than others. But we cannot be certain that any system is wholly inadequate to this all-important end, and we must therefore condemn no man, unless his practice be corrupt.'

"The general sentiment which runs through this system, 'that the *temper of the heart* is the one thing needful in order to acceptance with God,' appears to me Scriptural. All sects acknowledge that mere speculative assent is of no avail, that it is the *cordial* acceptance of the truth which makes the Christian. If, then, the same state of heart can exist in those who embrace different systems, I should pronounce them equally acceptable to God. This appears to me to be the great question,—'Whether the different systems embraced by professing Christians imply different tempers, principles of action, ends, and affections in those who embrace them; or, in other words, whether any of these systems from their very nature prove the absence of the Christian spirit in those by whom they are supported.'

"We find in the Scriptures denunciations against those who do not believe in Christ; but the reason seems to be, that they who reject Christ prove and express by this rejection a corruption of heart. 'Ye are not *of God*, therefore ye hear me not.' In the same way we must make it to appear that the reception of a system can flow only from a corrupt heart, before we exclude those who hold it from Divine favor. It is not so much the reception of one system or the rejection of another, as the temper of heart implied in this reception or rejection, which affects a man's acceptance with God. If this be true, it seems, that, to judge of the importance of doctrines, we must first form clear conceptions of the peculiar, characteristic, distinguishing spirit and temper which the gospel requires; and doctrines are to be estimated in proportion as they are necessary to this temper, are implied in it, or flow from it.

"I hope I have not wearied you upon this subject. I have lately occasionally made it the subject of reflection, and from the abundance of the head, as well as the heart, the mouth speaketh."

TO THE HON. WILLIAM ELLERY.

"*Boston, May*, 1807.

"DEAR AND HONORED SIR,—I conclude from your last letter, that we both agree in thinking that the great effect proposed by God, in the revelation he has made, is the *sanctification of the hearts of mankind*, that a certain *state of heart* is the end for which God exhibits certain objects to our view.

"You justly observe that this sentiment is no ground for indifference to truth, because the system of doctrines contained in the Scriptures must have a greater purifying tendency than any other. But while we acknowledge this, and acknowledge the solemn obligation which it imposes to search the Scriptures with impartiality and zeal, are we authorized to say that he who in any degree departs from the system of Scripture must be a stranger to their purifying influence? Can we say how much of the Scriptures must be received to constitute a man a subject of the promises of Christ?

"You ask, 'if it is not necessary, in order to the love of God and man, that we should entertain just ideas of the moral attributes of God, of the depravity of man, of the atonement of Christ, and of the influence of the Holy Spirit.' It is certain, that, to love God, some just ideas of him must be formed. But how little, after all, do we know! And may not mistakes with respect to the moral attributes of God consist with such a spirit as he has promised to bless? With respect to the depravity of man, I think it important that it should be most deeply and painfully felt; for it is hard to conceive of any rectitude of heart in him

who is insensible to his transgressions, and it is impossible that he should seek to put away iniquity who does not feel it to be a burden. But while I acknowledge this, I am by no means ready to say that no man can be a Christian who does not believe in the total depravity of human nature. A man may doubt on that subject, yet hate sin. With respect to the atonement of Christ, you know that the highest Calvinists are very much divided on this point. In this State, and in Vermont, several of the strictest of that denomination reject the idea of vicarious suffering and satisfaction, and suppose that Christ's obedience alone has rendered the exercise of Divine mercy toward men consistent and glorious. These persons are embraced by their brethren who hold the more ancient doctrine on this point. Shall we say that error on this point is fatal and irreconcilable with love of God and of man? With respect to the Holy Spirit, few or none deny its influences, but many differ in explaining its mode of operation. Some conceive that the Spirit operates according to certain general fixed rules, that its efficiency is to be expected and sought in the use of means, and that God has connected his agency with means in the spiritual world as constantly as in the natural world. They ascribe all their goodness to God, as the only fountain, on the same principle that they ascribe to him all the blessings of the present state. May not such men possess the love of God and of their neighbour?

"You ask, 'whether the Holy Spirit, in imparting holiness, has no regard to the system of doctrine maintained by the recipient.' I answer, that the Divine Spirit operates by truth; but can we say what number of propositions must exist in the mind as a preparation for those dispositions which constitute the Christian? Or can we say what number of propositions will be assented to, after these dispositions have been produced? In one word, can we draw up

a number of propositions, and declare that assent to these is necessarily connected with a Christian character, so that the want of such assent is a proof that this character does not exist? This is the question which I wish to have resolved. There are doctrines which appear to me important, and suited to the humiliation and sanctification of sinful men. I hear others oppose them. I think these persons suffer by the rejection of such important truth. But they assent to other truths of the greatest magnitude, and appear to feel and live as Christians. Shall I say to such,—'Depart from me, I cannot sit with you at the table of the Lord. You are in the bond of iniquity'? Taught by experience to know my own blindness, shall I speak as if I could not err, and as if they might not in some disputed points be more enlightened than myself?"

FROM THE REV. HENRY CHANNING.

"*Canandaigua, February 27th*, 1810.

"..... I perceive by your letter that the denouncing spirit rages and is confident. Surely no dispassionate man can be at a loss in determining whether it proceeds from the wisdom from above or from beneath. It seems they denounce Boston ministers as deists in *heart* and almost in profession.....

"You express a wish that I could be with you, as the time may be near when you will need the advice of a serious, experienced friend. It would, indeed, be a pleasure to be so situated that I could often see you, and render you any aid in my power. But I must add that I am satisfied that you stand on the firmest ground, while you 'determine to maintain a good conscience,' and as far as possible 'keep at a distance from dissension.' You justly remark that 'self-defence may oblige the most moderate to take a part in controversies which they would willingly avoid.' It will be your duty to be as bold in asserting your

right of judging, and declaring your sentiments, as others are in attempting to control inquiry."

LETTERS TO FRIENDS.

"*Boston, February 27th*, 1811.

"I was interested by the account you gave of the religious services of Dr. Mason. I have heard him, and know his forcible style of conception and elocution. I can only lament that such powers are not employed in recommending a purer and simpler form of Christianity. Is it not an evidence of the truth of Christianity, that, distorted and disfigured as it is by so many sects, it still commands assent, and retains its influence over so many minds? The distinction between mysterious doctrines and mysterious facts is rather mysterious to me. Do not think that it is my wish to find faults in one whom you admire. I feel my inferiority to Dr. Mason in talents and acquisitions; but I cannot suffer even a superior to strip my religion of its reasonableness, beauty, and simplicity."

"*Boston, December 24th*, 1812.

"I have received your letter asking my advice on the subject of a profession of religion, and have read it with very great satisfaction. One of the earnest wishes of my heart is accomplished. My friend, for whom I have so often feared, has consecrated herself to God, and is seeking immortality. I advise you immediately to connect yourself by profession as well as by affection with the body of believers, to bear your testimony to the excellence of your Saviour, and to the truth of his religion.

"The rite of the supper, as Jesus has left it, is as simple as it is affecting. It is only a memorial, a method of impressing the understanding and the heart. It is designed to confirm our faith, hope, love, obedience. The nature of the ordinance decides the qualifications for approaching it. Do

you wish to cherish the sentiments which this institution is suited and designed to awaken? Have you that impression of the truth and importance of Christianity which will lead to a serious and beneficial use of this means of improvement? Then are you authorized to approach; for you the table is spread. Let no apprehension of unworthiness deter you. What is there in the view of an affectionate friend suffering for us to repel and alarm us? Could Jesus Christ have placed himself before us in a character more suited to give hope and peace to a mind conscious of its errors and sins?

"I would not, however, advise you to unite yourself with any Christian church, if you are required to subscribe to articles of the truth of which you are not *fully* persuaded; and I beg you not to *force* your mind into the belief of any principles which *human guides* enforce as necessary to communion with the faithful. I confess I have some fears for you on this point. You are living, as I think, in a region of many errors, and your creed, as you formerly gave it to me, is not in my estimation altogether conformed to the simplicity and purity of the gospel. Your ears are familiarized to sentiments which I cannot hear without shuddering, and which appear to me more dishonorable to the Universal Father than any error born in the darkness of Popery. From the acceptance of these your moral feelings have preserved you; but if you give up the independence and sincerity of your mind to assertion and denunciation, you know not where you may be carried.

"Do not think me uncharitable, because I speak so freely of the doctrines of Calvinism. I truly love and honor many by whom these doctrines are embraced. I cannot easily be a bigot, whilst memory retains what I have recorded on one of her fairest tablets, and what I delight to recollect, — that Popery boasts of a Fénelon, Massillon, Pascal, &c.; Calvinism, of the New England Pilgrims, of Cowper, &c.;

Arminianism, of Barrow, Tillotson, Butler, &c.; and Unitarianism, of Newton, Watts, Locke, S. Clarke, Price, Lardner, &c. So much for theology."

"*Boston, December 29th*, 1812.

"I have spent this evening with our dear ——, and she put into my hands your letter on the subject of religion to which you referred in the last which I received from you. I read it with sorrow. I saw that your mind was yielding to impressions which I trusted you would repel with instinctive horror. I know that Calvinism is embraced by many excellent people, but I know that on some minds it has the most mournful effects, that it spreads over them an impenetrable gloom, that it generates a spirit of bondage and fear, that it chills the best affections, that it represses virtuous effort, that it sometimes shakes the throne of reason. On susceptible minds the influence of the system is always to be dreaded. If it be believed, I think there is ground for a despondence bordering on insanity. If I, and my beloved friends, and my whole race, have come from the hands of our Creator wholly depraved, irresistibly propense to all evil and averse to all good, — if only a portion are chosen to escape from this miserable state, and if the rest are to be consigned by the Being who gave us our depraved and wretched nature to endless torments in inextinguishable flames, — then I do think that nothing remains but to mourn in anguish of heart; then existence is a curse, and the Creator is ——

"O my merciful Father! I cannot speak of thee in the language which this system would suggest. No! thou hast been too kind to me to deserve this reproach from my lips. Thou hast created me to be happy; thou callest me to virtue and piety, because in these consists my felicity; and thou wilt demand nothing from me but what thou givest me ability to perform.

"I see with sorrow that you are beginning to depart from the simple and affecting truths which you once cherished. You have become the advocate of an 'inborn corruption' which incapacitates for duty, and yet you think man to be responsible. You even seem to be leaning to the melancholy doctrine, that he may be abandoned to endless misery for not experiencing a change of heart, over which he has little or no control, and which depends entirely on the will of another being. Perhaps I have mistaken your sentiments. Your letter is written in an obscure, mystical style, very different from what distinguishes your ordinary compositions. Your conceptions seem to me loose, unsettled, undefined; but, as far as they have form or substance, they are melancholy and forbidding. I am also deeply grieved to find you talking about persons, who call themselves Christians, and who believe this or that doctrine. My dear friend, let me beseech you to resist the bitter, censorious spirit which like a wasting pestilence has infected the air you breathe. Let us never forget how many purer and wiser minds than ours have viewed Christianity under forms and aspects very different from those which this religion has presented to us.

"You talk of some persons who hope to be saved, 'partly by their own merits and partly by Christ's.' I confess I have not met with this description of Christians; but I can easily conceive that men whose heads are thus confused may still have very good affections. I do know Christians whose hope rests on the *infinite*, *essential*, *unmerited*, and *unpurchased mercy* of God, who think that the freedom and glory of this mercy are diminished by that system which represents it as excited or produced by the merits or vicarious sufferings of another being, and who therefore dislike that unscriptural phrase 'the merits of Christ,' and the common, and as they think unsupported, explications of the atonement. Such Christians, who say nothing about their own worth, and whose fear is that they may throw a stain on

the essential mercy and placability of the Father, do not seem to me to err in affections, even though they may in sentiment; and I have found among them some of the most pious and disinterested of human beings.

"Your sweeping conclusion about those 'who do not think the Son equal to the Father' astonished me still more. Can you be ignorant of the scruples of the best minds on this darkest of all doctrines, of the great number of learned and excellent men who have rejected it, and of the many passages of Scripture which *seem* to contradict it, and which may decide a man's opinions whose heart is devoted to God and truth? Let me ask you to read a popular work on this subject, Worcester's Bible News, not so much with the hope that it may influence your judgment, as that it may teach you respect for those who differ from you. Locke's Reasonableness of Christianity, also, will give you some valuable ideas on the nature of faith, a subject which seems to you very obscure, and which Calvinism wraps in tenfold darkness.

"My good friend, if I know myself, I have no *proselyting zeal* about me. I wish only to aid you in recovering the *freedom and independence* of your mind, in order that you may think with calmness and deliberation. . . . . .

"Your sincere friend."

TO THE REV. NOAH WORCESTER.

"*Boston, January 11th*, 1813.

"DEAR SIR,—I have long known you by your writings, and have long wished to express my gratitude to you for the service you have rendered to the cause of truth and free inquiry. But a variety of occupations have prevented.

"I am now led to write you in consequence of the wishes of many in this quarter to establish a work,* in which your aid will be very important. It has long been the opinion of

* The Christian Disciple.

many friends of Scriptural truth, that we need a periodical publication which shall be adapted to the great mass of Christians, and the object of which shall be to increase their zeal and seriousness, to direct their attention to the Scriptures, to furnish them with that degree of Biblical criticism which they are capable of receiving and applying, to illustrate obscure and perverted passages, and, though last not least, to teach them their Christian rights, to awaken a zealous attachment to Christian liberty, to show them the ground of Congregationalism, and to guard them against every enemy who would bring them into bondage.

"Our conviction of the importance of this work has been strengthened by the appearance of a publication in The Panoplist, recommending the immediate erection of ecclesiastical tribunals. After conversing about the best means of attaining the end above described, the general question was, 'To whom shall we commit the superintendence of such a periodical?' and we unanimously concurred in the opinion that you are peculiarly fitted for the office of editing it. . . . . .

"You may expect aid from gentlemen in this town and vicinity. With the sentiments of these gentlemen you are generally acquainted. They are not precisely agreed as to the *person or dignity of Christ*, nor do they wish that the work should be devoted to any particular view of that subject. Whilst they are willing to admit the arguments of all sects, they wish chiefly to exhibit those *relations* and *offices* of Christ which Christians generally acknowledge, and to promote a spirit of forbearance and charity among those who differ in relation to this and other difficult subjects. As to the peculiarities of *Calvinism*, we are opposed to them, without censuring those who embrace those sentiments. We are opposed to that system particularly, inasmuch as it prostrates the independence of the mind, teaches men that they are naturally incapable of discerning

religious truth, generates a timid, superstitious dependence on those who profess to have been brought from darkness into light, and so commonly infuses into its professors a censorious and uncharitable spirit.

"You will do us the justice to believe, that in this business we are not actuated by the spirit of *partisans*. We have long given proof of our aversion to contention by bearing patiently and silently the most grave misrepresentations of our characters and sentiments. We have no desire to diffuse any religious peculiarities. Our great desire is to preserve our fellow-Christians from the systematic and unwearied efforts which are making to impose on them a *human creed* and to infuse into them angry and bitter feelings towards those who differ from them. Our great desire is to direct men to the Word of God, and to awaken in those Christians who receive this as their only standard a more devout, serious, earnest, and affectionate piety than they often discover."

"*Boston, April 28th*, 1815.

"My dear ——, I received your letter of the 21st, and thank you for the confidence in me which it discovers. I am very much interested in the subject of it, and wish to see as far as possible the operation of religious sentiments in the hearts of others. Your simplicity of character is a proof that I have received a tolerably faithful picture of your feelings. I attach vastly less importance to what you have experienced than you do yourself; but God's providence frequently makes our weaknesses and sufferings the means of our improvement; and I hope that your character will be purified, and your purposes of obedience confirmed, by terrors and emotions which seem to me to imply no supernatural agency.

"Religion, in my view of it, belongs to man as a rational and moral being. It consists of affections, dispositions, and

habits voluntarily cherished, and especially founded on just and amiable views of God. The religion which you describe seems to me a tumult of the soul, an involuntary impulse, a triumph of the passions over reason. I think that I respect religion too much to believe that it commonly springs up amidst such disorders, and, I may almost say, ruins, of the rational nature. You seem to me to have yielded yourself up to *terror*, not remembering that this passion, like every other, needs restraint, and that no passion is so apt to pass its bounds and to disorder the mind. The worst superstitions of the heathens originated in terror, and I have no doubt that to this the worst corruptions of Christianity are to be traced. You will grant, my young friend, that, whilst your mind was so powerfully excited by fear, you were not in the best frame for judging correctly of any religious truths. If you have ever seen a man under the influence of a panic, you will recollect that he was in a measure insane, and capable of being led anywhere by a firmer mind. All strong passion has the effect of insanity on the judgment, and makes a man a very different being from what he is in his cooler hours.

"You will permit me in all frankness to say to you, that I see much of human weakness and timidity in your description of your state before you received comfort, a weakness not peculiar to yourself, but at some periods of life experienced by almost every human being. In fact, we are all in some measure children to the end of life, without firmness where we ought to be most deliberate, and governed by passion where we ought to follow most resolutely the dictates of reflection. As to the joy which followed your depression, it was, I apprehend, a very natural effect. The mind, especially in youth, is soon exhausted by a strong emotion, and is prepared to receive an opposite feeling with peculiar force. Great depression and great joy are often seen to succeed each other. The mind over-

whelmed with the thought of danger is equally overwhelmed with transport by the thought of escape. My own temperament is rather equable, but my life is too much made up of successions of feeling. I am sometimes dull and dispirited, and feel as if all my powers and affections were dead. An interesting book, or a religious friend, or other circumstances, will at once awaken me from this low and desponding state, and then a new soul seems kindled within my breast. I have feelings and views so fresh, and tender, and animated, that I hardly appear to myself like the same man. This is the condition of our poor nature; and I have learned to ascribe these changes much more to my physical organization than to any peculiar influences from above. I see and hear of such vicissitudes of feeling as you describe very frequently, especially among the Methodists and Baptists, and I am nowise disposed to ascribe to hypocrisy the narratives given by these persons of sudden transitions from horrid thoughts and deep distress to a state of peace and assurance of God's favor. I learn, however, from the unhappy issue of many of these conversions, that they deserve little confidence, and that there is but one *sure test of piety*, which is *an habitual regard to the will of God*, leading us to correct every unchristian disposition, and to cherish all the virtues of the gospel.

"I think your errors may be traced very much to one source, — unjust and unworthy views of God. This is the great spring of corruption in religion. The great controversies in the church may be resolved into one question, — 'Is GOD INDEED PERFECTLY GOOD?' To my mind, most of the prevalent theories of religion rest on the supposition that he is *not* good, that his government is dreadfully severe, and that it is the greatest of evils to receive existence from his hand. I do not mean that these sentiments are professed, but they are really involved in the common theories of Christianity, and by being early fixed in our minds

they throw a sad darkness over God, over the present and future life, and prepare men for doctrines which hardly yield in gloominess to some of the superstitions of heathenism. Perhaps it is one of the last lessons which many of us learn, that God is truly good; and perhaps the hardest of all religious duties is to *confide* in his equity and benevolence. The severe views of religion which prevail are thought favorable to piety, very much on the ground that the most rigid monastic institutions were regarded with so much veneration. That these institutions often produced uncommon *strictness* and uncommon *fervor* I do not doubt; but their general influence on the character was not favorable, nor did they promote the great cause of piety.

"You speak of the *creed* you have signed, and justify it on the ground that you ought to show what sense or meaning you give to the Scriptures. When, therefore, you said, 'that there were three persons in one God,' you intended by this to give the *meaning* of certain passages of Scripture which have been variously interpreted, or to show in what manner you *understand* them. Now I object to this article, that it wholly fails of its end, that I cannot conceive *what* you *mean* by it; it brings to my mind but one idea, which I know you cannot intend, that one God is three Gods. In using language for the express purpose of showing what we mean, we cannot be too careful to avoid equivocal words, or unusual meanings of common words. The word *person* you use in a sense which I do not comprehend, and which is wholly unauthorized by common usage. What, then, is gained by forsaking the language of Scripture?

"On reviewing this letter, I find it written in a *manner* which you may possibly misapprehend. There may seem to you a want of tenderness, and a positiveness, which I assure you are far from my heart. I am obliged to write as fast as my pen will run, and in aiming at brevity I have omitted expressions of kindness which my heart would

prompt. I have simply wished to guard you against what I deem great errors, and to give you my views of the true spirit of Christianity. I only ask from you calm reflection. I beg that no authority may be given to my sentiments because they are asserted with strength. Confidence is no mark of truth. I wish you to write me with perfect frankness, and to point out what you think my errors. That your character will be improved by the scenes through which you have lately passed is my sincere hope. I shall never love you less for any opposition of sentiment, whilst I discern in your character the badge of a true disciple, which is *love*. As to your entering the ministry, you do well to deliberate. It is a profession to which we should be led by a desire of doing good, and a hope that we shall be more useful in it than in other pursuits. You will excuse any inaccuracies in so hasty and long a letter.

"Yours, affectionately,

"W. E. Channing."

1814. Mistakes as to the nature of religion.* "Were love to God a transport which we want ability to acquire, and which our nature cannot sustain, our merciful Father would never have required it as our duty. He is perfectly kind and equitable in his injunctions. He proportions his commands to our strength. The love which he requires is a sentiment of gratitude, esteem, and obedience, — such as we are capable of feeling towards an excellent and benevolent father, and such as we are to express in submission to his will, and especially in observance of his commands, and in imitation of his goodness.

"This love, from our very nature, is to be a *gradual*, *progressive* sentiment. No one expects it in the child in the same force and purity as in the ripened mind of man. It

* Christian Disciple, Vol. II., No. 10, p. 308.

is to grow with our growth, and to be strengthened by daily exercise, daily reflection, daily thanksgiving, and daily prayer; and thus to be exalted to that pure and unremitting fervor with which it glows in the breasts of angels and the spirits of the just made perfect."

1811. FREEDOM OF INQUIRY IN RELIGION. "From the manner in which Christ and his apostles introduced and established the gospel, we learn that they considered religion as a subject on which all men ought to think for themselves, to employ their own minds, to inquire, to deliberate, to fix a serious, impartial attention. It was the wish and intention of the great Founder of our religion, that his religion should be examined, should be received on very different grounds from false religions, should have no support but what it derived from its own excellence, and from the evidences of a Divine interposition by which it was accompanied. . . . . .

"Christianity everywhere considers it as a settled, conceded point, that men, on the subject of religion, are to exercise their own judgment, and to follow their own conviction. I know it is thought by some that this freedom of inquiry in religion is dangerous, especially to the great mass of mankind. It is thought more safe that a few should lead, and that the multitude should follow. It is said, what is common should be admitted as true, that the hereditary faith of men should never be disturbed by suggesting the importance of examination. . . . . .

"It is true that the right of private judgment may be abused. Men, under pretence of thinking for themselves, may renounce the plainest and most important truths, may choose to depart from the multitude, and, to show their boldness and independence, may advance sentiments at which a common mind shrinks with horror. But liberty in every form may be abused. There is but one infallible

method we can employ of preventing men from doing evil, — they must be bound hand and foot, and not be suffered to exert one power of body or of mind. Give them a power, and they will sometimes misapply it. Furnish a field of action, and they will sometimes go astray. Invigorate the mind, and they will sometimes employ this vigor in accomplishing unworthy ends. Encourage them to examine before they believe, and they will sometimes practise unfairness, dishonesty of mind, and array error in the garb of truth. But these evils form no balance against the innumerable advantages of a vigorous exertion of the powers we possess; and he who, in order to remove these evils, would restrain men's liberty of thought and action, would rob our nature of every thing which ennobles it, and reduce the race almost to the level of brutes. . . . . .

"The opinion is not entirely correct, that inquiry into religion has produced the multiplicity of sects in the Christian world. I would rather say, that the want of examination has often originated and extended them. The readiness of numbers to embrace what is dogmatically and loudly asserted, what addresses the passions instead of the understanding, has been the greatest temptation to the heads of sects to propagate their peculiarities, and furnishes them with followers. The heads of sects have generally their full share of ambition, and their ambition is fostered and made more active by the common disposition which they see to receive their doctrines without examination. We must not imagine that the way to stifle sects is to encourage men to receive religious opinions without thought or inquiry. In a land of universal toleration, this is the most direct way of laying them open to imposition and enthusiasm. *The only way of producing uniformity is to encourage serious and honest inquiry.*

"This uniformity has sometimes been sought by constraint; but in vain. If, indeed, the power of a state should

command one form of religion to be preached, and should prohibit the expression of all others, I grant that something like uniformity would appear. There would be no clamors of contending sects. We should have in their place the silence of the grave. But even in this case there would be no real uniformity of sentiment; for where the activity of the mind is checked on the subject of religion, men can hardly be said to have any sentiments. They may hear, they may receive words, but all their conceptions are vague. They may utter the same sounds, but as far as they attach any distinct meaning to what they say, the probability is that they resemble each other in opinion as little as do now the different sects. Besides, this vassalage of mind cannot for ever be maintained. There is an elastic force in the human understanding which resists this weight of oppression; and when the enslaved world once obtains freedom, and begins to think for itself, it will by reaction become more devious and extravagant in its operation than if no burden had been imposed. Again I say, the only way to produce lasting uniformity of sentiment is to encourage men to think seriously and honestly on religion, to inquire into the grounds of what they believe, to separate the true from the false, and the clear from the obscure.

"It is the influence of such examination to bring truth to light. Truth is not hidden beneath an impenetrable veil, but reveals herself to the sincere inquirer. Men of this character are not easily led away by noisy declamations, by bold assertions, by high pretensions. They soon learn that true wisdom is not characterized by positiveness, and that those who claim most unreserved assent from others deserve it the least. They demand proof, and this is the last demand which enthusiasm is prepared and inclined to answer. They are not carried away by sounds and names. They do not range themselves under a particular banner and denounce war and destruction on all who take a

different standard of belief. Claiming for themselves the right of inquiry, and taught by inquiry that they are prone to err, they become more diffident of their own judgment, and lay aside their censoriousness towards others. And if they do not agree entirely in sentiment with those around them, they still live in peace, and give and receive light; and thus a foundation is laid for real and increasing uniformity of opinion. . . . . .

"This subject is never uninteresting. It is peculiarly important at the time in which we live, when so many opinions divide the religious world, and so many are summoning us with confidence to come over to them, if we would find truth and salvation. In this state of things we are peculiarly called to examine before we approve. Among the various sects into which our community is broken, none can produce any warrant of infallibility, any appointment to the high office of interpreting the word of God for their brethren. Let us not be swayed by names or numbers; let us not give up our understandings to the sway of the positive and dictatorial. Let us seriously inquire into the grounds of our Christian faith, and, having established the great principle that Jesus Christ is the authorized teacher and light of mankind, let us repair to his word, where he speaks to us and to all mankind, and with sincere, honest, humble, impartial minds, desirous to receive and resolved to obey his truth, let us earnestly meditate on his instruction.

"If once we forsake this guide, to whom shall we attach ourselves? If once we choose to rest on human authority, whom shall we select as our teacher out of the multitude who wish to number us among their proselytes? What pledge have we, that we shall not throw ourselves into the arms of the most deluded? Let us, then, stand fast in the liberty with which Christ has made us free. Let us receive nothing because positively asserted by others. And neither let us settle down in our own present conceptions, as

if they were infallibly right and could not be corrected. Let us avoid equally the desire of singularity and the desire of conformity, and with dispassionate, unprejudiced minds follow our Master wherever he shall lead."

1813. HUMILITY IN THE INVESTIGATION OF CHRISTIAN TRUTH.* "A timid and abject spirit, at once unfavorable to truth and degrading to the character, has often been recommended as humility, and been cherished as a virtue on account of the honorable name which it has borne. I wish to consider what is intended by that humility which we ought to carry with us into our inquiries after religion. And for the sake of greater clearness, I will begin with pointing out what this humility does *not* imply.

"1. To search for truth with Christian humility does not imply that we consider ourselves incapable of judging for ourselves, and that we resign our understanding to the guidance of others. This is a humility which aspiring and haughty men very naturally recommend, for it is the great foundation of spiritual dominion. But we ought to be just to ourselves and to the powers which God has given us. We ought to feel that we are rational and moral beings, bound to exert our faculties, and accountable for their improvement. . . . . .

"If, indeed, we were assured that any human being was infallible, we might safely commit to him the keeping of our consciences. But where is this privileged mortal, whose understanding is a region of unclouded light, a temple of truth too holy for the entrance of a single error? Who will dare, in so many words, to claim this exemption from human frailty?

"Some, indeed, talk with great boldness of the perfect assurance which they have attained, as to the truth of the

* Christian Disciple, Vol. I., No. 1, p. 18.

most disputed doctrines. But who are these bold and confident men? Are they distinguished by the patience of their inquiries, the calmness of their minds, the deliberateness of their judgments, the humility and meekness of their tempers? Or are they the precipitate, ardent, vain, and ignorant?

"Some men are sure that they are right on points where the wisest have doubted, because light has flashed upon their minds from heaven. They carry *within* them an indescribable feeling which assures them of the truth of their sentiments. They have received sudden, irresistible impressions, which are worth more than a thousand arguments. Are these the men we are prepared to follow? Then there is no extravagance of sentiment or practice which we must not embrace. There is no absurdity of which some weak enthusiast has not felt the certainty.

"Some men owe their confidence not so much to enthusiasm as to their ignorance. Perhaps nothing produces so much positiveness, as narrowness of views. No difficulties ever strike that mind which looks only at one side of a question. No doubts disturb him who will not inquire.

"If, then, loud claims are not to be believed, how are we to choose the guide to whom we may resign our understanding? A thousand offer to conduct us to truth and heaven. Whom shall we follow? We must, at least, compare their different systems; and what is this but saying that we must employ our own understandings on religion, that we must judge for ourselves?

"Am I told by some of my readers, that they intend to take for their guides, not enthusiasts or the ignorant, but men of enlarged minds, more favored than themselves with the power and means of discovering truth? To this the answer is obvious. If men of enlarged minds were united in their views of Christian doctrines, the presumption would be strong in favor of their correctness. But who does not

know that on several subjects the wise are divided; that every age has teemed with the controversies of the learned; that great names are ranged under very different standards; that every sect can number among its advocates profound reasoners and laborious inquirers? The fact is, that the most vigorous minds are accessible to error, that the wisest men cannot escape all the prejudices of education, all the biases to which they are exposed from their connections and pursuits. Great men are often very weak. Some are blinded by attachment to old opinions which they began to defend before they had examined them. Others are perverted by a passion for novelty, and by the proud hope of raising a name on the ruin of ancient systems. Before we attach authority to another man's opinions, we should not merely ask, Is he intelligent and profound? We should inquire, How was he educated? where has he lived? And especially we should inquire, whether his reputation or interest be not in some degree connected with the sentiments he defends. And after all, how poorly can we judge of the degree of impartiality with which the mind of another has conducted its inquiries after truth!

"But some will say that they choose for their guides, not the learned, but the most *pious* class of Christians, and that they can hardly err in the company of saints. But, my friends, let me ask you, Who has constituted *you* the judges of other men's piety? Are the hearts of men so easily searched, are the marks of goodness so obvious and undoubted, are false professors of piety so easily detected, that you feel no hesitation in deciding to what denomination of Christians the purest piety ought to be ascribed? For myself, I had much rather be the judge of doctrines than of characters. If you act upon the principle of making the most pious your spiritual guides, you will probably attach yourselves to those who make the loudest professions of religion. But are you sure that you will find among these

the profoundest humility and the tenderest love of God and Jesus Christ? Do those who make the longest prayers always wear the purest hearts? . . . . .

"I am far from applying the character of the Pharisees to any class of Christians. Whilst every denomination has its hypocrites, there is no one, I trust, which, as a body, is marked by hypocrisy. I only mean to say that loud pretensions and fair appearances are not always to be trusted; that popular opinion may invest with peculiar sanctity the very sect which is most unsound in faith and practice. The purest piety is modest, unobtrusive, retiring. It is often concealed, or discloses itself only to the eye of friendship. It is not ambitious of controlling the opinions of the world, and puts in no claim to obedience from the multitude. How, then, shall we be sure that the class of Christians whom we may select as our guides are the purest who bear the Christian name?

"Another objection may be made to the principle of choosing the pious as our spiritual directors. If we look round on the Christian world with candid and inquiring minds, we shall see marks of the purest piety in every denomination. Every church will exhibit to us its saints. It is a delightful thought, that religion is confined to none of those inclosures of sect and party which are so often the limits of *our* narrow charity. As Protestants, we shrink from the corruptions of the Church of Rome. But what venerable sanctity has adorned many of its members! Who can pronounce the name of Fénelon without thinking better of human nature? Calvinism numbers among its disciples the fathers of New England, men of exalted piety, who breathed the spirit of the early martyrs. On the other hand, who can number the host of worthies who have looked with a shuddering abhorrence on the doctrines of Calvin? Into what perplexities shall we be thrown, into what opposite paths shall we be attracted, if we choose to believe whatever the pious have believed!

"Let us love and respect the good, but let us not lean upon them, as if they could never fall into error. The best heart is not always guided by the most enlightened mind. Sometimes very conscientious men are weak and timid. They are alarmed by the denunciations of the positive, fear to inquire, and thus yield themselves slaves to gross superstitions. Sometimes very excellent men have more fancy than judgment. They delight in the marvellous, and find hidden meanings in the plainest language of Scripture; they send their thoughts into the spiritual world, and mistake their vivid and pleasing dreams for Divine communications. Where shall we not be led, what absurdity shall we not adopt, if every opinion is to be embraced which has found a place in the minds of the devout? . . . . .

"2. To search for truth with Christian humility does not imply that we renounce our reason, and yield our assent to inconsistent or contradictory propositions. A humility of this kind is sometimes urged. We are told that the human mind cannot penetrate the depths of Divine wisdom; that it is pride to bring God's truth to the bar of our reason; that we are to receive the obvious meaning of Scripture, however it may contradict our previous conceptions of truth and rectitude; and that our humility is proportioned to the readiness with which we embrace what shocks our understandings.

"Every man must have met with language like this, not very precise, and not altogether erroneous, but yet adapted to produce unhappy effects, to terrify and subdue the spirit of inquiry, and to prepare men for the reception of any absurdity, which is urged on them, as a revelation from God. . . . . .

"But because our faculties and improvements are limited, we ought not to expect that we shall ever be called by our Creator to yield assent to doctrines which, after deliberate and impartial attention, clearly appear to contradict one

another, or to contradict the truths which God is teaching us by reason and by nature. If our rational powers are among the best gifts of God, if they form, in no small degree, the distinction and glory of our nature, and if it is our duty to employ and improve them, can we expect a revelation which will require us to renounce them, and will introduce into our understandings perplexity and confusion? . . . . .

"Let me ask, why is it that a revelation has been made to man, rather than to inferior animals? Is not this the plain answer, that man is a rational being? Is not the possession of reason the very ground on which this signal benefit is conferred upon our race? And can we suppose, then, that revelation contradicts reason, that it calls us to renounce the very faculties which prepare us for its reception? . . . . . To be Christians we need not cease to be rational. There is no such hostility as many seem to represent between reason and revelation. Revelation addresses its proofs and instructions to reason. Both are God's gifts, both are beams from the same source of light, both are consistent, and both designed to conduct us to perfection and immortality. Let it be remembered that I am speaking of reason, when exercised with seriousness, deliberation, and impartiality. Will any say that this deserves no respect, no confidence? . . . . .

"True humility is founded in a conviction of our ignorance, and of our exposure to error; and I now come to consider the influence which this conviction should have on our temper and conduct. In this humility chiefly consists. The mere conviction of our ignorance and fallibility is of little value. Every man in a degree possesses it. Every man will tell you, and tell you with sincerity, that his views are narrow, that he has often erred, that there are many things too vast to be grasped, many too intricate to be traced, and many too subtile to be detected by his imperfect vision. Still all men are not humble. It is one thing to

admit a truth, and another to reduce it to practice. Now it is a practical regard to the sentiments which I have endeavoured to illustrate which constitutes humility. We are humble only as far as we possess and discover the dispositions and habits which these sentiments are suited to produce. What, then, are these dispositions and habits?

"1. A strong and operative desire of extending and improving our views of Christian truth may be mentioned as the first disposition which ought to spring from a conviction of our ignorance and fallibility. Do we know little? then we should labor to know more. Of what avail is it to feel our mental wants, if we do not strive to supply them? Of what avail to reflect on the little progress we have made, unless we are induced to quicken our steps? Christians are too apt to think that there is virtue in merely perceiving and lamenting their imperfections. But the humility which stops here is unworthy the name. It may even prove injurious, by weakening the tone of the mind, and rendering it abject and desponding. True humility does not spend its time and strength in brooding with motionless and unavailing grief over its many imperfections. It is a spring of exertion. It teaches us, indeed, to count our present attainments trifling, but not to despise our nature and faculties. Of these we cannot think or speak too highly. They bear the signature of God, the indications of immortality, for they are capable of endless improvement. . . . . .

"2. Caution in forming our religious opinions is another habit of mind which a sense of our ignorance and fallibility should lead us to cultivate. . . . . From the present narrowness and imperfections of our minds, our first views are necessarily partial. Our first impressions are never precisely conformed to the truth. We must give ourselves time to penetrate beneath the surface; to remove from a subject what is accidentally associated with it; to survey it

on every side; to examine it at different times, in different lights, and in different states of mind; or we must not hope that our decisions will be correct. — My friends, beware of precipitate judgments. Patient attention is the price of truth. You know nothing of yourselves, nothing of your mental weakness, if you hope by casual and careless thought to attain to just and enlarged apprehensions. . . . . .

"3. A willingness to listen to objections is another most important disposition, to which we are directly led by a serious consideration of our ignorance and exposure to error. This is one of the most decided marks of true humility, — worth more than a thousand loud professions of our unworthiness and imperfections. I would that it were as common as it is just and honorable. . . . . Reluctance to submit your opinions to scrutiny is suspicious. It argues a latent fear of the result of inquiry. It is too often the refuge of conscious weakness, of timid yet stubborn error. Listen patiently to the arguments which are directed against your favorite sentiments. Look at them with a steady eye. Meet them in all their force. Do not examine them with a settled purpose to evade them. Be truth your single aim. Especially be not angry when your opinions are assailed. Many resist opposition to their sentiments, as if it were an insult. But why should you consider an honest objector as an enemy? If he attack your errors, he is an invaluable friend; and if he oppose the truth, his good intention still entitles him to respect. To repel objections with passion betrays both weakness and pride, and most effectually bars the mind against the entrance of truth.

"This openness to conviction which has now been recommended is one of the noblest virtues. It is infinitely more valuable than learning or genius. It is the foundation of improvement, and the surest defence against error; and yet how many want it! How many hate that light which exposes the weakness of some long-cherished opinions!

How many refuse to hear or to read whatever assails their favorite system! How many attach a sanctity to every doctrine they receive, and shrink from doubts, as from undisguised impiety! . . . . .

"4. Modesty in advancing and enforcing our sentiments is another disposition which ought to spring from a sense of our ignorance and fallibility. Surely, it does not become beings so erring as we are to claim submission, to offer ourselves as guides, to impose authoritatively our belief on other minds. . . . . .

"Genuine zeal for truth displays itself in presenting clearly and persuasively to our fellow-beings the evidences of what we deem important truth. It does not storm their minds with denunciation and positive assertion; but only asks to be heard with seriousness and candor, and invites and urges them to think and to judge for themselves. This is the only influence which benevolence and humility permit you to employ over the minds of men. Beware of exerting any other. Beware of wishing to be heads, and to give the hue of your own minds to all around you. This passion for spiritual power is very common, and has done incalculable injury. It has reared and sustained many a fabric of superstition. To accomplish its end, to establish its control over the faith of mankind, it assails the timid with threats, and the credulous with confident assertions. It pours out invective on men of independent minds, and teaches the multitude to recoil from them with instantaneous horror. By these means the most galling yoke is imposed on men. Their understandings are enslaved. They dread to inquire. A tremendous account is to be rendered by those who, instead of being clothed with humility and love, thus lord it over God's heritage, arrest the progress of the mind, and multiply obstructions in the path of truth."

August, 1814. ON THE SINFULNESS OF INFANTS.* "There are those whose language respecting children, if it have any meaning, directly affirms their guilt and their desert of ruin. According to some, human nature is sinful, corrupt, depraved at birth. Infants are demons in human shape, objects of God's abhorrence, and, if treated according to their deserts, they would be plunged into hell. . . . . .

"Common sense asks, Why, what has the infant done? He has only drawn a few breaths, and uttered a few unmeaning cries. He is an entire stranger to his nature and state, has not one idea of duty, and has not enjoyed a single means of improvement. Right and wrong, heaven and hell, all the truths and motives of religion, are as unknown to him as to the cradle in which he sleeps. Can sin, guilt, and ill-desert be ascribed to such a being? Can *he* be a sinner, who has never acted, never judged, and never felt any thing except a few pains and pleasures of the body?

"A sinful character is that which deserves blame and punishment. But do those qualities which children have received from their Creator, and brought with them into the world, — to which they have added no strength by voluntary indulgence in opposition to their sense of duty, and which they are as unable to prevent as they are to stop the course of the sun in the heavens, — do these deserve blame and punishment? It seems one of the clearest truths, that we are responsible only as far as we have power to know and do our duty; that we are depraved and guilty only as far as we indulge passions or perform actions which we have the means of resisting or avoiding. . . . . .

"I ask, then, if children were demons, fit for hell, would God have given them that attractive sweetness, that mild beauty, which renders them the most interesting objects on earth, and which compels us to shrink with horror from the

* Christian Disciple, Vol. II., No. 8, page 245.

thought of their everlasting ruin? Let those who support this sad doctrine contemplate the countenance of infancy, its unfurrowed brow, the smile with which it rewards the caresses of parental affection, and the tranquillity which sleep diffuses over its features. Who has not felt the turbulent passions of his nature calmed by the sight of childhood? And is this winning child, whom God has adorned with charms the most suited to engage the heart, abhorred by God, and fit only for the flames of hell?

"We must always remember that the moral perfections of God, his equity and justice, his benevolence and mercy, are the great and only grounds on which he claims, or can claim, our veneration and love. These perfections lie at the very foundation of piety Let these be shaken, and the whole fabric of religion totters. God is the proper object of our love and worship, not because he is a powerful Creator, but a righteous, equitable, and benevolent Creator. We learn from these obvious remarks, that we cannot suspect too strongly a doctrine which, after serious and impartial attention, appears to us to clash with God's moral perfections. Now let me ask, can we conceive any thing more repugnant to justice and benevolence, than the doctrine, that God brings children into existence with a nature deserving his abhorrence, and that he abhors them on account of the very nature which he has given them? How can we ascribe to God a more repulsive and unamiable character? How calamitous would it be to receive existence from such a Creator! We are taught to regard God as infinitely kinder than earthly parents. But with what severity of language should we speak of an earthly parent who should stamp a character of sin on his child, and then regard it with aversion! Is it possible that creatures fresh from the hands of God are at their first breath utterly vile and heirs of his wrath?"

May, 1815. DANGERS OF LIBERALITY.* "It is best, then, to acknowledge with Christian frankness and sincerity, that men of liberal minds have often been defective in fervor; that the spirit of free inquiry has sometimes, if not frequently, produced an indifference about opinions; and that the dread of bigotry and fanaticism has hurried many into the opposite extreme of languor and insensibility. In admitting all this, we do not disparage candor and free inquiry any more than we disparage a zeal for truth by saying that it has sometimes degenerated into intolerance, and lighted the fires of persecution, or than we condemn religious fervor by saying that it has sometimes, for want of judicious direction, broken out into delirious transports and a blind and furious enthusiasm. The fact is, human nature is prone to extremes. Every principle of action, and every feeling, may pass its proper limits.

"That a man of study and reflection should slide into a moderation of feeling bordering upon coldness, and should distrust and fear the admission of the affections into religion, ought not to excite our wonder. . . . . .

"When he sees the extravagances of imagination, which in ages of darkness were propagated as communications from God; when he sees the usurpations of the proud, the denunciations of the arrogant, and the frauds imposed on the credulous multitude by those who pretended to extraordinary sanctity; when, in a word, he sees human systems, the growth of gloomy or heated minds, taking the place of the mild and simple doctrines of Christianity, rending whole kingdoms with dissension, embittering social life, quickening and arming the worst passions of our nature, and even promising the highest seats in heaven to the most unrelenting and uncharitable; when the reflecting man reviews these melancholy scenes in the history of the Church, can

* Christian Disciple, Vol. III., No. 5, page 134.

we wonder, if, from dread of extravagance and from distrust of the affections, he should fall into a habit of cold speculation, and should prefer a religion which, retiring from the heart, resides only in the understanding?

"The affections are not useless parts of our nature, but on their just direction our excellence and happiness peculiarly depend. The affections give to the character its principal charm and interest. We delight to see the heart awakened by a pure emotion. . . . . .

"Is affection an improper tribute to be offered to God? His whole character is an appeal to our affections. His character is the concentration of all that is lovely and venerable; and in his relation of Father, Benefactor, and Sovereign, how powerful are his claims on the best sentiments of our nature!

"It is of great importance that religion should be an affection of the heart, as well as a conviction of the understanding; because it is to govern in a soul which is agitated by various passions, which is powerfully solicited by the world, and which is prone to contract a sensual taint and a sordid character. These strong and dangerous propensities of human nature are not to be counteracted by mere speculations of the intellect. The heart must be engaged on the side of God and duty. To subdue the love of the world, a nobler love must be kindled within us. A new and better channel must be formed for that desire which we would turn from unworthy ends. We cannot, if we would, extinguish the affections. Our safety consists in directing their force and energy to noble and elevated objects, — to God, to virtue, and to immortality.

"Religious sensibility is of great importance, as it gives animation and delight to the obedience of all God's commands, — to the practice even of painful duties. Sensibility, affection, communicates an almost incredible force to human nature. Where men love strongly, what toils and sacrifices

can they endure! how lightened is labor! how cheerful is suffering! A warm affection seems almost to create new faculties in the soul. It spreads a new lustre over the countenance, and seems even to nerve the body with new power. Men have never done much when the heart has been cold; and what have they not done, what have they not subdued, when the heart has been quickened to generous emotions? To rob religion of sensibility is to make it inert and unproductive, — to render obedience to God a toil, and his worship a mechanical and wearisome service.

"Let us, then, beware of that tendency to coldness which has been charged on Liberal Christians. Their views of religion have certainly nothing to chill the heart, but every thing to raise it into love and hope. Their views might well be distrusted, were they unfavorable to an affectionate piety; and, what is more, their cause might be given up in despair, did it require the extinction of sensibility. Human nature will never be satisfied with a system which does not awaken sentiment and emotion. Man has a thirst for excitement, he delights in the exercise of his affections, and his Creator can hardly be supposed to give him a religion which contradicts this essential part of his nature."

August, 1815. Practical Christianity.* "Christianity, we must always remember, is a temper and a spirit, rather than a doctrine. It is the life of God in the soul of man. It consists of practical truths, designed to enlarge the heart, to exalt the character, to make us partakers of a divine nature. Now in the Epistles of St. Paul we have Christianity displayed to us in the very form which accords with the genius of such a religion, — not as a speculation of the intellect, but as a living principle, a sentiment of the heart, a spring of holy action. We see its nature in the influences

* Christian Disciple, Vol. III., No. 8, page 236.

which it exerts. We see a soul penetrated with love to God, with a disinterested charity, with anticipations of a higher existence, with a consciousness of guilt, with gratitude to the Saviour, and with an inextinguishable desire to make known his love and promises to the ends of the earth. These sentiments break forth as from a heart too full to contain them, with an energy which discovers the mighty power of the religion which gave them birth, and with a freedom which no other style but the epistolary would have admitted. We cannot but consider the letters of Paul, with all their abrupt transitions and occasional obscurities, as more striking exhibitions of genuine Christianity than could have been transmitted by the most labored and artificial compositions. . . . . .

"The connection between faith and practice seems to be considered by some as mysterious, or as the effect of some inexplicable union, which is formed by faith between Jesus Christ and the human soul. But this subject seems to be very simple. Faith is the sincere and practical reception of the whole religion of Jesus, and particularly a strong persuasion of that future life which is offered to us through Jesus Christ; it is a deep conviction of practical truths, that is, of truths suited to operate on the human heart, and to *excite to action.* To have a true faith is to feel deeply the most powerful motives which can be offered to a life of piety and virtue. The connection between faith and holiness, then, is natural and palpable, and involved in no obscurity."

EXTRACTS FROM A LETTER, &C., TO THE REV. SAMUEL C. THACHER.

"*June 20th*, 1815.

"MY FRIEND AND BROTHER, — I have recollected with much satisfaction the conversation which we held the other morning, on the subject of the late Review, in the Panoplist

for June, of a pamphlet called 'American Unitarianism.' ..... After leaving you, my thoughts still dwelt on the subject; and, painful as is the task, I have thought it my duty to exhibit to the public the topics which we discussed, as well as to add some reflections suggested by private meditation.

"I bring to the subject a feeling which I cannot well express in words, but which you can easily understand. It is a feeling as if I were degrading myself by noticing the false and injurious charges contained in this Review. I feel as if I were admitting that we need vindication, that our reputations want support, that our characters and lives do not speak for themselves. My self-respect, too, is wounded, by coming into contact with assailants who not only deny us the name of Christians, but withhold from us the treatment of gentlemen. These feelings, united with my love of peace, would induce me to pass over the Review in silence, if it were limited to the sphere within which we are personally known. In this sphere, I trust, its bitterness, coarseness, and misrepresentations will work their own cure; and that no other defence is required, but the tenor of our ministry and lives. But the work in which this article is published is industriously spread through the country, and through all classes of society. The aspersions which it contains are also diffused, as widely as possible, by conversation and even by newspapers. We owe, then, to ourselves, and, what is more important, to the cause of Christian truth and charity, some remarks on the representations and spirit of the Review. . . . . .

"The Panoplist Review, though extended over so many pages, may be compressed into a very narrow space. It asserts, —

"1. That the great body of Liberal ministers in this town and its vicinity, and of Liberal Christians, are Unitarians in Mr. Belsham's sense of the word; that is, they believe that

Jesus Christ is a mere man, who when on earth was liable to error and sin; to whom we owe no gratitude for benefits which we are now receiving; and for whose future interposition we have no reason to hope.

"2. The Review asserts, that these ministers and Liberal Christians are guilty of hypocritical concealment of their sentiments, and behave in a base, cowardly, and hypocritical manner.

"3. Christians are called to come out and separate themselves from these ministers and the Liberal body of Christians, and to withhold from them Christian communion.

"I will consider these three heads in their order.

"The first assertion to be considered is, that the great body of Liberal ministers in this town and vicinity, and of Liberal Christians* are Unitarians, in Mr. Belsham's sense

* "I have used the phrase or denomination *Liberal Christians* because it is employed by the Reviewer to distinguish those whom he assails. I have never been inclined to claim this appellation for myself or my friends, because, as the word *liberality* expresses the noblest qualities of the human mind, — freedom from local prejudices and narrow feelings, the enlargement of the views and affections, — I have thought that the assumption of it would savor of that spirit which has attempted to limit the words *orthodox* and *evangelical* to a particular body of Christians. As the appellation, however, cannot well be avoided, I will state the meaning which I attach to it.

"By a Liberal Christian, I understand one who is disposed to receive as his brethren in Christ all who, in the judgment of charity, sincerely profess to receive Jesus Christ as their Lord and Master. He rejects all tests or standards of Christian faith and of Christian character, but the word of Jesus Christ and of his inspired apostles. He thinks it an act of disloyalty to his Master to introduce into the Church creeds of fallible men as bonds of union, or terms of Christian fellowship. He calls himself by no name derived from human leaders, disclaims all exclusive connection with any sect or party, professes himself a member of the Church Universal on earth and in heaven, and cheerfully extends the hand of brotherhood to every man of every name who discovers the spirit of Jesus Christ.

"According to this view of Liberal Christians, they cannot be called

of that word. . . . . It is unnecessary to multiply extracts to show, that not only Boston, but its vicinity, is involved in the charge. In fact, the Liberal party, in general, is ranged under the standard of Mr. Belsham. Now we both of us know this statement to be false. . . . . .

"The word *Unitarianism*, as denoting opposition to Trinitarianism, undoubtedly expresses the character of a considerable part of the ministers of this town and its vicinity, and the Commonwealth. But we both of us know that their Unitarianism is of a very different kind from that of Mr. Belsham. We agreed in our late conference, that a majority of our brethren believe that Jesus Christ is more than man, that he existed before the world, that he literally came from heaven to save our race, that he sustains other offices than those of a teacher and witness to the truth, and that he still acts for our benefit, and is our intercessor with the Father. This we agreed to be the prevalent sentiment of our brethren. There is another class of Liberal Christians, who, whilst they reject the distinction of three persons in God, are yet unable to pass a definitive judgment on the various systems which prevail, as to the nature and rank of Jesus Christ. They are met by difficulties on every side, and generally rest in the conclusion, that He whom God has appointed to be our Saviour must be precisely adapted to his

a party. They are distinguished only by refusing to separate themselves in any form or degree from the great body of Christ. They are scattered, too, through all classes of Christians. I have known Trinitarians and Calvinists who justly deserve the name of Liberal, who regard with affection all who appear to follow Jesus Christ in temper and life, however they may differ on the common points of theological controversy. To this class of Christians, which is scattered over the earth, and which I trust has never been extinct in any age, I profess and desire to belong. God send them prosperity! — In this part of the country, Liberal Christians, as they have been above described, are generally, though by no means universally, Unitarians, in the proper sense of that word. It is of this part of them that I chiefly speak in this letter."

work, and that acceptable faith consists in regarding and following him as our Lord, Teacher, and Saviour; without deciding on his nature or rank in the universe. There is another class, who believe the simple humanity of Jesus Christ; but these form a small proportion of the great body of Unitarians in this part of our country; and I very much doubt whether of these one individual can be found, who could conscientiously subscribe to Mr. Belsham's creed as given in the Review. The conduct of the Reviewer, in collecting all the opinions of that gentleman, not only on the Trinity, but on every other theological subject, in giving to the *whole* collection the name of *Unitarianism*, and in exhibiting this to the world as the creed of Liberal Christians in this region, is perhaps as criminal an instance of unfairness as is to be found in the records of theological controversy. The fact is, that the great body of Liberal Christians would shrink from some of these opinions with as much aversion as from some of the gloomy doctrines of Calvin. . . . . .

"I trust that the statement which has now been made will not be considered as casting the least reproach on those amongst us, who believe in the simple humanity of Jesus Christ. Whilst I differ from them in opinion, I have certainly no disposition to deny them the name and privileges of Christians. There are gentlemen of this class, whom I have the happiness to know, in whom I discover the evidences of a scrupulous uprightness and a genuine piety; and there are others, whose characters, as portrayed by their biographers, appear to me striking examples of the best influences of Christianity. . . . . .

"I now come to the second charge of the Review: That the liberal ministers of Boston and the vicinity, and the most considerable members of the Liberal party, 'operate in secret; intrust only the initiated with their measures; are guilty of hypocritical concealment of their sentiments; behave in a base and hypocritical manner.' . . . . . This

charge is infinitely more serious than the first. To believe with Mr. Belsham is no crime. But artifice, plotting, hypocrisy *are* crimes; and if we practise them, we deserve to be driven, not only from the ministry, not only from the Church, but from the society of the decent and respectable. Our own hearts, I trust, tell us at once how gross are these aspersions; and our acquaintance with our brethren authorizes us to speak in their vindication with the same confidence as in our own.

"It is not to be wondered at, that those who have charged us with holding sentiments which we reject should proceed to charge us with hypocritically concealing our sentiments. Most of us have often contradicted Mr. Belsham's opinions; and they who insist that these opinions are ours will be forced to maintain that we practise deceit. They start with a falsehood, and their conclusion cannot therefore be true. I am not, however, disposed to dismiss this charge of artifice and hypocrisy so lightly. . . . . As to myself, I have ever been inclined to cherish the most exalted views of Jesus Christ which are consistent with the supremacy of the Father; and I have felt it my duty to depart from Mr. Belsham in perhaps every sentiment which is peculiar to him on this subject. I have always been pleased with some of the sentiments of Dr. Watts on the intimate and peculiar union between the Father and Son. But I have always abstained most scrupulously from every expression which could be construed into an acknowledgment of the Trinity. My worship and sentiments have been Unitarian, in the proper sense of that word. In conversation with my people, who have requested my opinion upon the subject, especially with those who consider themselves Trinitarians, I have spoken with directness and simplicity. Some of those who differ from me most widely have received from me the most explicit assurances of my disbelief of the doctrine of the Trinity, and of my views in relation to the Saviour. As to my

brethren in general, never have I imagined for a moment, from their preaching or conversation, that they had the least desire to be considered as Trinitarians; nor have I ever heard from them any views of God or of Jesus Christ but Unitarian, in the proper meaning of that word.

"It is indeed true, that we seldom or never introduce the Trinitarian controversy into our pulpits. We are accustomed to speak of the Father as the only living and true God, and of Jesus Christ as his Son, as a distinct being from him, as dependent on him, subordinate to him, and deriving all from him. This phraseology pervades all our prayers and all our preaching. We seldom or never, however, refer to any different sentiments, embraced by other Christians, on the nature of God or of Jesus Christ. We preach precisely as if no such doctrine as the Trinity had ever been known. We do not attempt to refute it, any more than to refute the systems of the Sabellians, the Eutychians, or the Nestorians, or of the other sects who have debated these questions with such hot and unprofitable zeal. But, in following this course, we are not conscious of having contracted, in the least degree, the guilt of insincerity. We have aimed at making no false impression. We have only followed a general system, which we are persuaded to be best for our people and for the cause of Christianity; the system of excluding controversy as much as possible from our pulpits. In compliance with this system, I have never assailed Trinitarianism; nor have I ever said one word against Methodism, Quakerism, Episcopalianism, or the denomination of Baptists; and I may add Popery, if I except a few occasional remarks on the intolerance of that system. The name of these sects, with that single exception, has never passed my lips in preaching, through my whole ministry, which has continued above twelve years. We all of us think it best *to preach the truth*, or what we esteem to be the truth, and to say very little about error, unless it be error of a strictly

practical nature. A striking proof of our sentiments and habits on this subject may be derived from the manner in which you and myself have treated Calvinism. We consider the errors which relate to Christ's person as of little or no importance, compared with the error of those who teach that God brings us into life wholly depraved and wholly helpless, that he leaves multitudes without that aid which is indispensably necessary to their repentance, and then plunges them into everlasting burnings and unspeakable torture for not repenting. This we consider as one of the most injurious errors which ever darkened the Christian world; and none will pretend that we have any thing to fear from exposing this error to our people. On the contrary, we could hardly select a more popular topic; and yet our hearers will bear witness how seldom we introduce this topic into our preaching. The name of Calvinist has never, I presume, been uttered by us in the pulpit. Our method is, to state what we conceive to be more honorable, and ennobling, and encouraging views of God's character and government, and to leave these to have their effect, without holding up other Christians to censure or contempt. We could, if we were to make strenuous efforts, render the name of Calvinist as much a word of reproach in our societies, as that of Unitarian is in some parts of our country. But we esteem it a solemn duty to disarm, instead of exciting, the bad passions of our people. We wish to promote among them a spirit of universal charity. We wish to make them condemn their own bad practices, rather than the erroneous speculations of their neighbour. We love them too sincerely to imbue them with the spirit of controversy.

"In thus avoiding controversy, we have thought that we deserved, not reproach, but some degree of praise for our self-denial. Every preacher knows how much easier it is to write a controversial than a practical discourse; how

much easier it is to interest an audience by attacking an opposite party, than by stating to them the duties and motives of the gospel. We often feel that our mode of preaching exposes us to the danger of being trite and dull; and I presume we have often been tempted to gratify the love of disputation which lurks in every society. But so deeply are we convinced that the great end of preaching is to promote a spirit of love, a sober, righteous, and godly life, and that every doctrine is to be urged simply and exclusively for this end, that we have sacrificed our ease, and have chosen to be less striking preachers, rather than to enter the lists of controversy.

"We have seldom or never assailed the scheme of the Trinity, not only from our dislike to controversy in general, but from a persuasion that this discussion would, above all others, perplex and needlessly perplex a common congregation, consisting of persons of all ages, capacities, degrees of improvement, and conditions in society. This doctrine we all regard as the most unintelligible about which Christians have ever disputed. If it do not mean that there are three Gods (a construction which its advocates indignantly repel), we know not what it means; and we have not thought that we should edify common hearers by attacking a doctrine altogether inconceivable, and wholly beyond the grasp of our faculties. We have recollected, too, the mischiefs of the Trinitarian controversy in past ages, that it has been a firebrand lighting the flames of persecution, and kindling infernal passions in the breasts of Christians; and we have felt no disposition to interest the feelings of our congregation in a dispute which has so disgraced the professed disciples of the meek and lowly Jesus. Many of us have been disinclined, not only to assail systems which we do not believe, but even to enforce the views which we have given of the rank and character of Jesus Christ; because we have known how divided the best men have been

on these topics, and how largely we ourselves partake of the fallibility of our nature; because we have wished that our hearers should derive their impressions on these points as much as possible from the Scriptures; and because we have all been persuaded that precision of views upon these subjects is in no degree essential to the faith or practice of a Christian. We have considered the introduction of the Trinitarian controversy into the pulpit as the less necessary, because we have generally found that common Christians admit that distinction between God and his Son, and that subordination of the Son, which we believe to be the truth; and as to that very small part of our hearers who are strongly attached to the doctrine of the Trinity, while we have not wished to conceal from them our difference of opinion, we have been fully satisfied that the most effectual method of promoting their holiness and salvation was to urge on them perpetually those great truths and precepts about which there is little contention, and which have an immediate bearing on the temper and the life. To conclude, we have never entered into discussions of the doctrine of the Trinity, because we are not governed by a proselyting temper. I will venture to assert, that there is not on earth a body of men who possess less of the spirit of proselytism than the ministers of this town and vicinity. Accustomed as we are to see genuine piety in all classes of Christians, in Trinitarians and Unitarians, in Calvinists and Arminians, in Episcopalians, Methodists, Baptists, and Congregationalists, and delighting in this character wherever it appears, we are little anxious to bring men over to our peculiar opinions. I could smile at the idea of a Unitarian plot, were not this fiction intended to answer so unworthy an end. There cannot be a doubt, that, had we seriously united for the purpose of spreading Unitarianism by any and every means, by secret insinuations against those who differ from us, by uncharitable de-

nunciations, and by the other usual arts of sects, we might have produced in this part of the country a Unitarian heat and bitterness not inferior to that with which Trinitarianism is too often advocated. But not the slightest whisper of any concert for this end has ever reached me; and as to these arts, our people can best say how far we have practised them. Our people will testify how little we have sought to influence them on the topics of dispute among Christians, how little we have labored to make them partisans, how constantly we have besought them to look with candor on other denominations, and to delight in all the marks which others exhibit of piety and goodness. Our great and constant object has been to promote the *spirit of Christ*, and we have been persuaded that in this way we should most effectually promote the interests of Christian *truth*. . . . . .

"I now come to the third head of the Review, which I propose to consider. The Reviewer, having charged us with holding the opinions of Mr. Belsham, and hypocritically concealing them, solemnly calls on Christians who differ from us in sentiment 'to come out and be separate from us, and to withhold communion with us.' . . . . . This language does not astonish me, when I recollect the cry of heresy which has been so loudly raised against this part of the country. But I believe that this is the first instance in which Christians have been deliberately called to deny us the Christian name and privileges. As such let it be remembered; and let the consequences of it lie on its authors.

"Why is it that our brethren are thus instigated to cut us off, as far as they have power, from the body and church of Christ? Let every Christian weigh well the answer. It is not because we refuse to acknowledge Jesus Christ as our Lord and Master; it is not because we neglect to study his word; it is not because our lives are wanting in the spirit and virtues of his gospel. It is because, after serious investi-

gation, we cannot find in the Scriptures, and cannot adopt as instructions of our Master, certain doctrines which have divided the Church for ages, which have perplexed the best and wisest men, and which are very differently conceived even by those who profess to receive them. It is, in particular, because we cannot adopt the language of our brethren in relation to a doctrine which we cannot understand, and which is expressed in words not only unauthorized by the Scripture, but, as we believe, in words employed without meaning (unless they mean that there are three Gods) by those who insist upon them. This is our crime, that we cannot think and speak with our brethren on subjects the most difficult and perplexing on which the human mind was ever engaged. For this we are pursued with the cry of heresy, and are to have no rest until virtually excommunicated by our brethren. . . . . .

"Most earnestly do I wish that the Dissertation of Dr. Campbell on Heresy, in his Translation of the Four Gospels, was more generally read and considered. He has proved, I think, very satisfactorily, that heresy, as the word is used in the Scriptures, does not consist in the adoption or profession of wrong opinions, but in a spirit of division, of dissension, of party, in a factious and turbulent temper; and that the heretic is not a man who entertains erroneous or even injurious sentiments, but one who loves to be called Rabbi and master; who has a disposition to separate Christians, to create or to extend sects and parties. . . . . Let Christians weigh well the nature and guilt of schism, the consequences of separation, and the spirit of their religion, before they adopt the measure recommended in this Review. For myself, the universe would not tempt me to bear a part in this work of dividing Christ's church, and of denouncing his followers. If there be an act which, above all others, is a transgression of the Christian law, it is this. . . . . I know it will be said that Christians are not called upon to

reject real Christians, but heretics and false pretenders to the name. But heresy, we have seen, is not a false opinion, but a sectarian spirit; and as to false pretences, we desire those who know us to put their hands on their hearts, and to say whether they can for a moment believe that we hypocritically profess to follow the instructions of Jesus Christ. Does charity discover nothing in our language and lives to justify the hope that we are united to Jesus Christ by love for his character, and by participation of his spirit? . . . . .

"I wish that my motives for these earnest remonstrances against division may be understood. I feel as little personal interest in the subject as any individual in the community. Were the proposed separation to take place, I should still enjoy the ordinances of the gospel in the society of those whom I best love. The excommunication which is threatened gives me no alarm. I hear this angry thunder murmur at a distance, with as little concern as if it were the thunder of the Pope, from whom it seems indeed to be borrowed. But whilst I fear nothing for myself, I do fear and feel for that body of which Christ is the head, which has been bleeding for ages under the contests of Christians, and which is now threatened with a new wound. I feel for the cause of our common Christianity, which I am set to defend, and which has suffered inconceivably more from the bad passions and divisions of its friends than from all the arts and violence of its foes. I cannot but look forward with pain to the irritations, hatreds, bitter recriminations, censoriousness, spiritual pride, and schismatical spirit which will grow up under this system of denunciation and exclusion, and which may not only convulse many churches at the present moment, but will probably end in most unhappy divisions among the very Christians who denounce us; who seem indeed to be united, now that a common enemy is to be trodden under foot, but who have sufficient diversities of

opinion to awaken against each other all the fury of intolerance, when this shall have become the temper and habit of their minds. I repeat it, I have no interest in this point but as a Christian; and as such, I look with a degree of horror on this attempt to inflame and distract our churches. Error of opinion is an evil too trifling to be named in comparison with this practical departure from the gospel, with this proud, censorious, overbearing temper, which says to a large body of Christians, 'Stand off, we are holier than you.' . . . . .

"Having thus considered the three principal heads in the Review, I now proceed to offer a few words of friendly admonition, as to the temper and conduct which become our brethren and ourselves, under the injuries which we receive.

"The first suggestion you have undoubtedly anticipated. It is, that we remember the great duty which belongs to us as Christians, of regarding our enemies with good-will, if possible with a degree of approbation, at least with displeasure tempered with compassion. . . . . As to the great mass of those Christians who view us with so much jealousy, we must remember that they know us only by report, that they believe as they are taught by men to whom they ascribe an eminent sanctity, and that they are liable to be carried away on this, as on every other subject, by loud assertion, and by addresses to their fears. Accustomed as they are to hear us branded with names and epithets, to which they have attached no definite ideas, but which seem to them to express every thing depraved, can we wonder that they shrink from us with a kind of terror? To this great class of our opposers we certainly owe nothing but kindness; and we should esteem it an unspeakable happiness, that we can look with so much pleasure and hope on those by whom we are dreaded and shunned; that we are not obliged by our system to regard *our* adversaries as the

enemies of God, and the objects of his wrath. On this point, above all others, I would be urgent. Our danger is, that reproach will hurry us into language or conduct unbecoming the spirit of our Master. Let us remember that our opposers cannot ultimately injure us, unless we permit them to awaken bad passions, and to impair our virtues. Let us remember what is due from us to our religion. The more uncharitable our age is, the more the glory of the gospel is obscured by its being exhibited as a source of censoriousness and contention, the more we owe it to our Lord to wipe off this reproach from his truth, to show the loveliness of his religion, to show its power in changing the heart into the image of divine forbearance and forgiveness. . . . . .

"Another important suggestion is this: — Let us hold fast our uprightness. . . . . That our churches are to be generally shaken by the assault which is made upon them, I am far from believing. But some may suffer. It is not impossible that the efforts which are now employed to direct against us the uncharitableness and mistaken zeal of the country, and to spread disaffection through the most uninstructed and the most easily excited classes of society, may produce some effect. We know the fluctuations of the human mind. We know that the sincerest Christians are often unduly influenced by timidity, and may be brought to suspect a minister, when he is decried as a heretic who is leading souls to hell. It requires more strength of nerves and more independence of mind than all good people possess to withstand this incessant clamor. A storm, then, may be gathering over some of us, and the sufferers may be tempted to bend to it. But God forbid, my friend, that any of us should give support to the aspersions cast on our uprightness, by ever suppressing our convictions, or speaking a language foreign to our hearts. Through good report and through evil report, let us with simplicity and sincerity declare what

we believe to be the will of God and the way to heaven, and thus secure to ourselves that peace of conscience which is infinitely better than the smiles of the world. Let us never forget that the most honored condition on earth is that of being sufferers for the sake of righteousness, for adherence to what we deem the cause of God and holiness; and let us welcome suffering, if it shall be appointed us, as bringing us nearer to our persecuted Lord and his injured apostles. My brother, we profess to count man's judgment as a light thing, to esteem this world and all which it offers to be vanity. We profess to look up to a heavenly inheritance, and to hope that we shall one day mingle with angels and just men made perfect. And with these sublime hopes, shall we tremble before frail and fallible fellow-creatures, be depressed by difficulties, or shrink from the expression of what we deem important and useful truth? God forbid!

"I have time to add but one more suggestion. Let us beware lest opposition and reproach lead any of us into a sectarian attachment to our peculiar opinions. This is a danger to which persons of ardent and irritable temper are peculiarly exposed. Too many of us are apt to cling to a system in proportion as it is assailed, to consider ourselves pledged to doctrines which we have openly espoused, to rally round them as if our own honor and interest were at stake, and to assert them with more and more positiveness, as if we were incapable of error. This is the infirmity of our frail nature; and whilst we condemn it in others, let us not allow it in ourselves. Let us be what we profess to be, patient inquirers after truth, open to conviction, willing to listen to objections, willing to renounce error, willing to believe that we, as well as others, may have been warped in our opinions by education and situation, and that others may have acquired important truths which, through weakness or prejudice, we may have overlooked. Were we a party, anxious to make proselytes, we should do well to be

positive and overbearing. But we profess to be anxious that our fellow-Christians should inquire for themselves into the difficulties of religion, instead of implicitly receiving what we have embraced. We profess to believe that candid and impartial research will guide mankind to a purer system of Christianity than is now to be found in any church or country under heaven. Most earnestly do I hope that we shall not be betrayed by any violence of assault into a sectarian heat and obstinacy, which will discredit our profession, and obstruct this glorious reformation of the Church of God."

EXTRACTS FROM REMARKS ON THE REV. DR. WORCESTER'S LETTER TO MR. CHANNING.

August, 1815. "By the advice of friends whose judgment I respect, I have resolved to offer to the public some remarks on the letter of Dr. Worcester in reply to mine addressed to Mr. Thacher. They will be few in number, and as free as possible from personalities. . . . . .

"My letter to Mr. Thacher is considered by Dr. Worcester as bitter and severe; but, called as I was to repel the charge of immorality brought against men whose virtue and piety I know and honor, and to whom I am bound by ties of friendship and Christian affection, I felt it a solemn duty to express what I deemed a virtuous indignation. I labored, however, to temper displeasure with Christian moderation; and, on finishing my letter, my fear was, not that I had expressed an improper warmth, but that I should be considered as wanting in sensibility to the injuries done to some of the best men in this community. I know, however, the many weaknesses and imperfections of my nature. I may have erred, for the provocation was great; and I sincerely repeat the declaration with which I closed my letter, that for every departure from the spirit of the gospel I implore the Divine forgiveness. . . . . .

"One great object of Dr. Worcester's letter, if I understand him, is to convey to his readers the impression, that the mode of preaching of Liberal ministers is 'concealed, indistinct, and unfaithful.' This he attempts to prove, first, from the statement which I made of the views of Liberal Christians in relation to the character of Jesus Christ. This statement, he says, is ambiguous. That it is general, that it does not descend to particulars, I grant; but I deny that it is ambiguous, if considered, as it ought to be, in relation to the object for which it was made. It was simply designed to repel the charge of the Reviewer, that we are Unitarians in Mr. Belsham's sense of the word. Was it necessary that in such a statement every question should be met and answered, which might possibly be started in relation to our sentiments? . . . . .

"The next proof of our preaching in a 'concealed, indistinct, and unfaithful manner' is derived from the account which I have given of our general style of preaching. . . . . My statement was plainly this: — that we labor to preach the truth, to preach whatever we clearly discover in the word of God; but that, in doing this, we generally avoid references to opinions which we do not receive, and never hold up those Christians who differ from us to censure or contempt. According to this statement, we evidently preach the whole counsel of God, as far as we understand it. But Dr. Worcester, passing over this account, has selected a passage in which I observe that 'we urge perpetually those great *truths* and *precepts* about which there is little contention, and which have an immediate bearing on the temper and life.' From this passage he infers that we can urge none of the 'primary and peculiar doctrines and institutions of the gospel, because about all these there has been great contention.' To this I answer, first, that I have never understood that there has been much contention about the 'great *precepts*' of the gospel, not even about those which

have been most habitually disregarded. Christians, satisfied with dismissing these from their lives, have retained them in their systems. Even the bitterest persecutors in the Church have never disputed the precepts of 'loving their neighbour as themselves,' and of 'doing to others as they would have others do to them.' . . . . . It may next be observed, that the common disputes about the 'great *doctrines*' of the gospel have not related so much to their truth and importance, as to some inferior points connected with them. For example, there has been much debate about the benevolence of God, whether it forms his whole moral character and his highest spring of action, or whether it be subordinate to wisdom or rectitude; but all parties have agreed that God is benevolent. In the same manner, many have disputed about the omnipresence of God, whether his substance be extended through infinite space, or whether he be present only by his knowledge and power to every portion of space; but all have agreed that God is omnipresent. In like manner, Christians have disputed about the precise way in which Christ's death has an influence on our forgiveness; but that it has a real and important influence on forgiveness almost all unite in asserting. Once more, Christians have never been weary with disputing on the mode and extent of spiritual influences; but, with very few exceptions, all maintain that these influences are real, and are promised to our prayers. Let no one, then, say, that we preach no primary or peculiar doctrines of Christianity, because we insist perpetually on principles in which the different classes of Christians generally concur. Such principles, we sincerely believe, form the very substance and glory of the gospel. They shine with a clear and unsullied splendor. We are deeply impressed with their truth, their supreme importance, and their sufficiency to salvation; and therefore we urge them with unwearied importunity, with zeal and affection.

"It is possible that Dr. Worcester will go on to object, that, according to this very account, our preaching must be extremely general, vague, wanting in precision, and therefore unfaithful. The answer is short. If we are indeed general and vague in our representation of the truths of the gospel, it is *because we are faithful*, because we dare not be precise above what is written, because we stop where the Scriptures seem to us to stop, and because we have a very deep and sorrowful persuasion that our religion has been exceedingly defaced and corrupted by the bold attempts of theologians to give minute explanations of its general truths and to cramp it with the fetters of systematic precision. We tell our hearers, that God sent his Son to die for us, exalted him to be our Prince and Saviour, and ordained him to be Judge of the quick and dead, and never think it necessary or faithful to fill up the outline of Scripture, by adding, that the Son who was sent was the very God who sent him, or by speculating on the infinite evil of sin, and on the necessity of an infinite atonement, in order to illustrate the fitness of such a mediator. Thus, then, we preach. Whether our preaching be nothing more than the inculcation of 'natural religion,' let our hearers determine.

"Dr. Worcester asks, if the 'apostles avoided controversy,' and never 'attempted to refute error,' &c. We think the answer very obvious. In the first place, we wonder that any can confound the situation of ministers in a Christian country, where the gospel has long been known and acknowledged, with the situation of the apostles, who preached a new religion which the multitude derided and opposed, and which their new and ignorant converts were continually corrupting with Jewish and heathen mixtures. We sincerely believe that the great principles for which the apostles contended are now received with little dispute in Christian communities, and we conceive that the great business of a minister is to urge those truths in their primitive simplicity on

the hearts and consciences of men, instead of making them subjects of controversy.

"There is another important remark on this point. We do not pass sentence like apostles on many subjects of controversy among Christians, for this very plain reason, — that we are *not* apostles. We are, what we labor never to forget, uninspired and fallible men; and we are apt to distrust ourselves, when persons of intelligence and piety see cause to differ from us in the interpretation of Scripture. We dare not preach like apostles on points which have perplexed and divided men of the profoundest thought and the purest lives; and we know from the genius and leading principles of Christianity, that these points are not, and cannot be, essential to salvation. We dare not imitate the bold and positive language in which the darkest doctrines are sometimes urged as undoubted and essential, and in which the sentence of excommunication is pronounced on serious inquirers after truth, by some who discover no superiority of intellect or virtue. . . . . .

"It is urged, that our sentiments lead us into an entire indifference to Christian truth; that we believe all error to be innocent; that we consider belief in the truth as no virtue; and that we thus set aside those passages of Scripture in which the highest importance is attached to this belief. This objection is founded on our extending the name and privileges of Christians to the lowest Unitarians, who hold some sentiments from which, as I stated, we generally shrink with aversion. Now I deny that any indifference to truth, or any contempt of those passages which enjoin belief of the truth, is implied in this extension of our charity. . . . . The *faith* to which salvation is promised in Scripture seems to us to reside in the heart much more than in the understanding. The true believer is distinguished, not by clearness and extent of views, but by a 'love of light,' a 'love of the truth,' originating in a sincere desire to 'do the will of God.' . . . . .

"This love of divine truth, this honest, unprejudiced, obedient mind, we highly venerate and always enjoin as essential to salvation. But we know that this love of truth is consistent with the reception of many errors. We know that the apostles, during the life of their Master, possessed this temper in a sufficient degree to constitute them his followers, and yet they grossly misunderstood some of his plainest and most important declarations. We believe, too, that, at the present day, many in every Christian country are placed in circumstances almost, if not quite, as unfavorable to a clear understanding of the gospel, as the apostles were under the ministry of Jesus. From considerations of this nature, from a knowledge of the amazing power of education and other circumstances over the opinions of every mind, and from a fear that we, as well as others, may have been swayed and blinded by unsuspected infelicities attending our condition, we are very unwilling to decide on the degree of truth which is required for the salvation of every individual, or to say that the errors of an apparently sincere professor of Christianity are inconsistent with a pious character. In our judgment of professed Christians, we are guided more by their temper and lives than by any peculiarities of opinion. We lay it down as a great and indisputable principle, clear as the sun at noonday, that the great end for which Christian truth is revealed is the sanctification of the soul, the formation of the Christian character; and wherever we see the marks of this character displayed in a professed disciple of Jesus, we hope, and rejoice to hope, that he has received all the truth which is necessary to his salvation. Acting on this rule, we cannot exclude from the Church the lowest Unitarians who profess subjection to Jesus Christ. Of this class we have known or heard of individuals who have breathed the genuine spirit of their Master; who have discovered a singular conscientiousness in all the walks of life; whose charity has overflowed in good deeds; whose

wills have been resigned in affliction; and who lived as seeking a better country, even a heavenly. Such men we have not dared to exclude from the Christian Church, on the ground of what seem to us great errors, any more than to exclude the disciples of Calvin; whose errors we also deeply lament, but whose errors are often concealed from us by the brightness of their Christian virtues.

"We are not conscious that by this liberality we at all oppose those passages of Scripture in which great stress is laid upon belief of the truth; for we are convinced, from laborious research into the Scriptures, that the great truth which is the object of Christian belief, and which in the first age conferred the character of disciples on all who received it, is simply this, that *Jesus is the Christ*, or anointed by God to be the light and Saviour of the world. Whenever this great truth appears to us to be sincerely acknowledged, whenever a man of apparent uprightness declares to us his reception of Jesus in this character, and his corresponding purpose to study and obey his religion, we feel ourselves bound to give him the hand of Christian fellowship, and to leave it to the final Judge to determine how far he is faithful in searching after the will of his Lord. This duty of searching, and of searching with humility and with a single and fearless regard to truth, we constantly inculcate; and we sincerely believe that in this way we approve ourselves friends of truth much more decidedly than if we should aim to terrify and prostrate the minds of our hearers by threatening them with everlasting misery, unless they receive the peculiar views of the gospel which we have seen fit to espouse. . . . . .

"The principal argument which Dr. Worcester offers in favor of the proposed separation of Trinitarians and Unitarians is the great differences between them. I sincerely regret that these differences are so studiously magnified, whilst the points of agreement between these classes of

Christians are as studiously overlooked. Dr. Watts and Dr. Doddridge have left us a better example. Trinitarians and Unitarians both believe in one God, one infinite and self-existent mind. According to the first, this God is three persons; according to the last, he is one person. Ought this difference, which relates to the obscurest of all subjects, to the essence and metaphysical nature of God, and which common Christians cannot understand, to divide and alienate those who ascribe to this one God the same perfections, who praise him for the same blessings, who hope from his mercy the same forgiveness, who receive on his authority the same commands, and who labor to maintain the same spirit of devotion to his will and glory? According to Trinitarians, Jesus, who suffered and died on the cross, is a derived being, *personally* united with the self-existent God. According to the Unitarians, he is a derived being, *intimately* united with the self-existent God. Ought this difference, which transcends the conception of common Christians, to divide and alienate those who love the same excellent character in Jesus Christ, who desire to breathe his spirit and follow his steps, who confide in him as perfectly adapted to the work which he was sent to accomplish, and who labor to derive just conceptions of his nature from his own instructions? The differences between Trinitarians and Unitarians are very often verbal. As soon as Trinitarians attempt to show the consistency of their doctrine of three persons with the Divine unity, their peculiarities begin to vanish, and in many of their writings little or nothing is left but one God acting in three characters, or sustaining three relations, and intimately united with his son Jesus Christ. Ought distinctions so subtile and perplexing to separate those who love the same Divine character and respect the same Divine will?

"Dr. Worcester, however, seems disposed to widen the breach between these classes of believers. He says, the

Saviour 'whom you acknowledge is infinitely inferior to ours.' I answer, we believe that God saves us by his son Jesus Christ, in whom he dwells, and through whom he bestows pardon and eternal life. A higher Saviour we do not know and cannot conceive. But Dr. Worcester does not stop here. He says, 'The God whom you worship is different from ours.' To this I answer, as others have answered before, that I with my brethren worship 'the God of Abraham, of Isaac, and of Jacob, who hath glorified his son Jesus,' whom Peter preached, — Acts iii. We worship 'the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ,' to whom Paul 'bowed the knee.' We worship that God whom Jesus in his last moments worshipped, when he said, 'Father, into thy hands I commend my spirit.' We worship that God to whom our Lord directed us, when he put into our lips these affecting words, 'Our Father who art in heaven.' We worship that God of whom our Master spoke in these memorable words, — 'The hour cometh, and now is, when the true worshippers shall worship the Father in spirit and in truth.' Dr. Worcester speaks of a different God; but we can renounce ours for no other. This worship we are persuaded is a spring of purity, joy, and hope, and we trust that it will prove to us a source of unfailing consolation amidst the trials, reproaches, and rude assaults of the world. — But I must stop. The points of dispute between Unitarians and Trinitarians cannot be treated with any fairness within the narrow compass of a pamphlet, and I wish not to discuss them in connection with the present controversy, which primarily relates to the *moral character* of the great body of Liberal Christians.

"Dr. Worcester has labored to show, that charity, instead of forbidding, encourages and requires Trinitarians to exclude Unitarians from Christian fellowship, because charity commands us to promote truth, and truth is promoted by this system of exclusion. But let me ask, Why is truth to

be promoted ? Not for its own sake, but for its influence on the heart, its influence in forming a Christian temper. In what, then, does this temper consist ? very much in candor, forbearance and kind affection. It follows, that any method of promoting truth which is unfriendly to these virtues is unchristian ; it sacrifices the end to the means of religion. Now let me ask, whether the practice of rejecting as ungodly men those who differ from us on subtile, perplexing, and almost (if not altogether) unintelligible doctrines, be not obviously and directly opposed to the exercise and diffusion of candor, forbearance, kind affection, and peace. Has it not actually convulsed the Church for ages with discord and war ? The right of denouncing those who differ on such doctrines, if granted to one Christian, must be granted to all ; and do we need the spirit of prophecy to foretell the consequences, if the ignorant, passionate, and enthusiastic, who form the majority of every community, shall undertake to carry this right into practice ? The idea, that a religion which is designed for weak and fallible mortals of all classes and capacities, and which is designed to promote unity, peace, candor, and love, should yet make it our duty to reject, as wholly destitute of goodness, every man, however uniform in conduct, who cannot see as we do on points where we ourselves see little or nothing, appears to me the grossest contradiction and absurdity. If this be Christianity, we may say any thing of our religion more truly, than that it is a religion of peace. A more effectual instrument of discord was never devised. Charity, then, does not command the Trinitarian to exclude his Unitarian brother. Charity commands us to use mildness and persuasion ; to open our eyes to the marks of virtue in those from whom we differ ; to beware of ascribing error to a corrupt heart, unless the proof be striking ; to think modestly of ourselves, and to drive from our minds the conceit of

infallibility, that most dangerous error which ever crept into the Church of Christ." *

* "I cannot forbear earnestly desiring Christians to obtain, if possible, some accurate ideas of the most important point in the present controversy. Let them learn the distinction between Trinitarianism and Unitarianism. Many use these words without meaning, and are very zealous about sounds. Some suppose that Trinitarianism consists in believing in the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. But we all believe in these; we all believe that the *Father* sent the *Son*, and gives, to those that ask, the *Holy Spirit*. We are all Trinitarians, if this belief is Trinitarianism. But it is not. The Trinitarian believes that the One God is *three distinct persons*, called Father, Son, and Holy Ghost; and he believes that each of these persons is equal to the other two in every perfection, that each is the only true God, and yet that the three are only one God. This is Trinitarianism. The Unitarian believes that there is but one person possessing supreme Divinity, even the Father. This is the great distinction; let it be kept steadily in view. Some Christians have still more vague ideas on this subject. They suppose that Trinitarians think highly of Jesus Christ, whilst Unitarians form low ideas of him, hardly ranking him above common men, and therefore they choose to be Trinitarians. This is a great error. Some Unitarians believe that the Father is so intimately united with Jesus Christ, that it is proper, on account of this union, to ascribe Divine honor and titles to Jesus Christ. Some Unitarians deny that Jesus is a creature, and affirm that he is properly the Son of God, possessing a Divine nature derived from the Father. Some Unitarians, who assert that Jesus is a creature, maintain that he is literally the first-born of the creation, the first production of God, the instrumental cause by whom God created all other beings, and the most exalted being in the universe, with the single exception of the Infinite Father. I am persuaded that under these classes of high Unitarians many Christians ought to be ranked who call themselves Orthodox and Trinitarians. In fact, as the word *Trinity* is sometimes used, we all believe it. It is time that this word was better defined. Christians ought not to be separated by a sound. A doctrine which we are called to believe, as we value our souls and our standing in the Church, ought to be stated with a precision which cannot be misunderstood. By the Trinity, I have all along understood the doctrine, that *God is three persons*."

EXTRACTS FROM REMARKS ON THE REV. DR. WORCESTER'S SECOND LETTER TO MR. CHANNING.

November, 1815. "As far as I understand the prevalent sentiments among Liberal Christians in this quarter of our country, they appear to me substantially to agree with the views of Dr. Samuel Clarke and the author of Bible News; and were we required to select human leaders in religion, I believe that we should range ourselves under their standard in preference to any other.

"Dr. Clarke believed that the FATHER ALONE is the Supreme God, and that Jesus Christ is not the Supreme God, but derived his being and all his power and honors from the Father, even from an act of the Father's power and will. He maintains, that, as the Scriptures have not taught us the manner in which the Son derived his existence from his Father, it is presumptuous to affirm that the Son was created, or that there was a time when he did not exist. On these subjects the word of God has not given us light, and therefore we ought to be silent. The author of Bible News in like manner affirms that the Father only is the Supreme God, that Jesus is a distinct being from God, and that he derives every thing from his Father. He has some views relating to the 'proper Sonship' of God, which neither Liberal nor 'Orthodox' Christians generally embrace. But the prevalent sentiments of Liberal Christians seem to me to accord substantially with the systems I have above described. Like Dr. Clarke, the majority of this class feel that the Scriptures have not taught the mode of Christ's derivation. They, therefore, do not call Christ a creature, but leave the subject in the obscurity in which they find it, carrying with them, however, an impression that the Scriptures ascribe to Jesus the character of Son of God in a peculiarly high sense, and in a sense in which it is ascribed to no other being.

"With respect to the ATONEMENT, the great body of Liberal Christians seem to me to accord precisely with the author of Bible News, or rather both agree very much with the profound Butler. Both agree that Jesus Christ, by his sufferings and intercession, obtains forgiveness for sinful men; or that, on account, or in consequence, of what Christ has done and suffered, the punishment of sin is averted from the penitent, and blessings forfeited by sin are bestowed. It is, indeed, very true, that Unitarians say nothing about *infinite* atonement, and they shudder when they hear that the ever-blessed God suffered and died on the cross. They reject these representations, because they find not one passage in Scripture which directly asserts them or gives them support. Not *one* word do we hear from Christ or his apostles of an *infinite* atonement. In not *one* solitary text is the efficacy of Christ's death in obtaining forgiveness ascribed to his being the Supreme God. All this is theology of man's making, and strongly marked with the hand of its author. But the doctrine of the Atonement, taken in the broad sense which I have before stated, is not rejected by Unitarians. On the question, which is often asked, How the death of Christ has this blessed influence, they generally think that the Scriptures have given us little light, and that it is the part of wisdom to accept the kind appointment of God, without constructing theories for which the materials must be chiefly borrowed from our own imagination.

"My motive for making the preceding statement is no other than a desire to contribute whatever may be in my power to the peace of our churches. I have hoped, that, by this representation, some portion of the charity which has been expressed towards Dr. Clarke and the author of Bible News may be extended towards other Unitarians; and that thus the ecclesiastical division which is threatened may be averted. Let it not, however, be imagined that I or my friends are anxious *on our own account* to extort from

the 'Orthodox' an acknowledgment, that possibly we hold the true gospel, and are not 'devoid of Christian faith and virtue.' We regard other Christians as brethren, but can in no degree recognize them as superiors in the Church of our common Master. We do not dread the censures which they may pass on our honest opinions. We rejoice that we have a higher judge, whose truth it is our labor to learn, obey, and maintain, and whose favor will be distributed by other principles than those which prevail in a prejudiced and shortsighted world. But, whilst we mean not to be suitors to our brethren, we are willing and desirous, by any fair representations, to save them from a course which, as we firmly believe, will be injurious to their own characters, unjust to their fellow-Christians, unfriendly to the diffusion of the gospel, and highly offensive to our benevolent Master. Most happy should I be, if, by any honorable concessions on our part, our churches could be preserved from the shock which threatens them. . . . . .

"It is intimated that *we* 'dread a development.' We respect many of our opponents, but we *dread* none. Our love of peace, they may be assured, has another origin than fear or selfish views. It is from deep conviction, that I have stated once and again, that the differences between Unitarians and Trinitarians lie more in sounds than in ideas; that a barbarous phraseology is the chief wall of partition between these classes of Christians; and that, would Trinitarians tell us what they mean, their system would generally be found little else than a mystical form of the Unitarian doctrine. These two classes of Christians appear to me to concur in receiving the most interesting and practical truths of the gospel. Both believe in one God of infinite perfection; and we must remember that it is this perfection of God, and not his unknown substance, which is the proper object of the Christian's love. Both believe in the great doctrine, that eternal life is the free gift of God

through Jesus Christ. Both learn from the lips and life of Jesus the same great principles of duty, the same exalted views of human perfection, and the same path to immortality. I could easily extend these points of agreement. And what are the questions which divide them? Why, these: — First, Whether the One God be three distinct subsistences,* or three persons, or three '*somewhats*'† *called persons*, as Dr. Worcester says, for want of a 'better word'; and, secondly, Whether one of these three subsistences, or improperly called persons, formed a personal union with a human soul, so that the Infinite Mind, and a human mind, each possessing its own distinct consciousness, became a *complex person*. Such are the points, or rather phrases, of difference between these Christians. And ought phrases like these — of which we find not a trace in the Bible, which cannot be defined by those who employ them, which convey to common minds no more meaning than words of an unknown tongue, and which present to the learned only flitting shadows of thought, instead of clear and steady conceptions — to separate those who are united in the great principles which I have stated? Trinitarians, indeed, are apt to suppose themselves at an immeasurable distance from Unitarians. The reason, I think, is, that they are surrounded with a mist of obscure phraseology. Were this mist dispersed, I believe that they would be surprised at discovering their proximity to the Unitarians, and would learn that they had been wasting their hostility on a band of friends and brothers."‡

"* Wardlaw.

"† This word has been used by Trinitarians in writing and conversation."

‡ For a yet fuller statement of Mr. Channing's views at this period, the reader is referred to the remarks on "The System of Exclusion and Denunciation in Religion," Works, Vol. V., pp. 373–391.

June, 1818. WHAT IS RELIGION ?* "We may answer in general, that religion consists in a moral resemblance of God, — in a willing, a chosen, a conscientious, and habitual conformity to his commands, as our supreme rule of life, and our highest happiness, — in supreme love of God, — in doing to others as we would that others should do to us, — and in keeping ourselves unspotted from the world. The seat of religion is the heart; and this emphatically is the will of God, even our sanctification; a separation of our hearts, our wills, and affections to his service. All besides this, which belongs to religion, comes under the denomination either of *means* or of *motives*. Let us endeavour clearly to understand this distinction, that we may ever use the means and motives of religion with a steady view to its infinitely important *end;* and in that end seek, where alone we can find it, the true and eternal good of our souls. . . . . .

"I said that the seat of religion is the heart. From the abundance of the heart, or according to its moral state, we think, and feel, and speak, and act. Love to God and love to our neighbour form, therefore, the *essence* of religion; because, in proportion to their prevalence in the heart, they will produce a conformity of all our thoughts and words, our feelings and actions, to the will of God; they will subdue every passion and appetite to the dominion of his law; they will make his approbation absolutely essential to the peace of our hearts; they will make it the very life of our happiness. But let us comprehend the commandment, for it is exceeding broad. We cannot love God till we know him. Religion comprehends, therefore, a knowledge of God. In proportion to our love of God will be our confidence in him, our entire satisfaction with the courses and designs of his providence, whether we understand them or

* Christian Disciple, Vol. VI., No. 6, page 161.

not, and our resignation to his will. If we love him, we shall earnestly desire and endeavour to be like him; we shall do whatever we know or believe will please him; we shall avoid whatever we have reason to believe that he cannot approve. If we so love God, we shall feel also a Christian love of one another; for the greatest obstacles to the exercise of this love, of the active and universal charity of the gospel, will then be overcome in our hearts. We shall feel a love which not only worketh no ill to our neighbour, but all practicable good, — a love that can bear and forbear, that hopeth all things and endureth all things, that can return blessings for curses, and prayers for injuries, — in fine, a love which will excite us in all circumstances to do to others as we would that others should do to us. To be religious, therefore, is to be wholly conformed to the will of God; it is to have in ourselves the mind that was in Christ; it is to possess the will, the temper, and affections of Christians. . . . . .

"What, then, is the connection between Religion and its Doctrines and Rites?

"I answer: — 1. The *doctrines* of religion comprehend all that we are taught of the character, government, and purposes of God, of the person and offices of our Lord, of our moral nature and capacities in this world, of the happiness of the good and the misery of the wicked in the life to come. These doctrines are addressed to our faith; and it is obvious that simply to believe them will not make us religious. How, then, are they conducive to this end? Reflect on them but for a moment, and you will perceive that in these doctrines are comprehended all the *motives* by which the gospel excites us to a godly, a sober, and a righteous life. As motives, it is immediately apparent how very important they are to the great and infinitely momentous purposes for which God has revealed them. . . . . .

"But they will save us only by conducing to the end for

which they were given. Even as the body without the spirit is dead, so is faith in these and all the doctrines of religion, unless productive of a Christian temper, of good works, of obedience to God, dead also.

"2. Still more plain is the true relation between the *rites* of religion and religion itself. No positive institutions could, indeed, be more expressive, more appropriate, than are Baptism and the Lord's Supper. And yet, separated from the ends of their appointment, what tendency has their observance to make us more acceptable to God? . . . . .

"We can scarcely exaggerate the importance of these ordinances as *means* of religion. But, unless they conduce to the ends for which they were intended, they will avail us nothing.

"I will only add two inferences: — 1. The means of religion may be changed in conformity with the circumstances of those for whose use they are appointed. But *religion itself can never change.* Like God, it is the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever. . . . . 2. Is religion itself for ever essentially the same? Does it consist in an unreserved devotion of the heart, the passions, will, and affections, to God; in a choice of God as our supreme good, and a ready obedience to his will, from a *principle of love?* Then let us value and improve the means, with a faithful reference to their infinitely important end."

September, 1816. CHRISTIAN UNION. "The guilt of a *sectarian spirit* is but little understood, or it would not be so often and inconsiderately incurred. To bestow our affections on those who are ranged under the same human leader, or who belong to the same church with ourselves, and to withhold it from others who possess equal if not superior virtue, because they bear a different name, is to prefer a party to the Church of Christ. Still more, to look with an unfriendly, jealous eye on the improvements and

graces of other denominations is one of the most decided acts of hostility to Jesus Christ which his disciples have power to commit; for the virtue towards which they thus cherish and express dislike is the image of Christ, the promotion of which is the highest end of his life, of his death, and of his mediation at the right hand of God.

"I speak not this to the reproach of one class of Christians rather than of another. All have reason for deep humiliation. All have been infected with this accursed leaven of party spirit. Few Christians, it is to be feared, look on the virtues and attainments of other denominations with equal pleasure as on those of their own. Few do entire justice to those who differ from them. It is to be hoped, however, that in this respect a real improvement is spreading through Christendom. The partition walls are beginning to fall. The fires of persecution are going out.

"This union of Christians is the brightest feature, the distinguishing glory of our age. Let it be extended, and our religion will have free course through the earth. A new face will then be given to the world. Hitherto the strength of Christians has been spent in mutual conflict. The force of the kingdom of Christ has been wasted in civil war. Let Christians of every name and every region feel and respect the holy bond of brotherhood; let their prayers and labors be united for the diffusion, not of sectarian peculiarities, but of that genuine Christianity which all hold in common; let a coöperation as extensive as the Christian world be formed to diffuse it and make it practically efficient.

"Let churches lay down their arms and love one another, and nations will begin to learn war no more. Let Christians of different countries embrace one another as brethren, let them coöperate in schemes of general utility to the Church and to mankind, and they will shudder at the thought of breaking this sacred union. Peace, universal peace, will be then their constant prayer."

1817. CHRISTIAN LIBERTY. "It was by asserting their right to the free use of the Scriptures, and to private judgment, that the Reformers laid the foundation of that purer state of religion in which we now rejoice. Let these rights never be wrested from us. Let us hold them dearer than all civil immunities. Better have our persons and property than our minds subjected to a despot.

"Is it said, that this jealousy is no longer needed in Protestant countries, that faith and conscience are here left free? We certainly have reason to thank God for the enjoyment of greater religious liberty than was ever possessed before. The fire of persecution is quenched; the Scriptures are in every man's hand. But still, to read the Scriptures with independent minds requires no little effort. There are still obstructions to the privilege of judging for ourselves. The spirit of Popery did not expire among our ancestors with its forms. Human nature and its ruling passions are always the same. The same love of power, the same desire to lead, the same wish to dictate to the consciences of others, which burned in the breasts of the Romish clergy, and built up the Romish hierarchy, still subsist and operate among us. There is still, and always will be until man is more exalted by Christianity, a conspiracy against the religious as well as the civil rights of men. In Protestant countries there are those who are impatient of contradiction, who wish to impose their views on others, who surround their creeds with similar terrors to those made use of by the Papal church, and doom to destruction all who have the temerity to differ from their opinions. And what is yet more melancholy, in Protestant countries are multitudes who, awed by great names and loud denunciations, want courage to inquire for themselves, fear to doubt what positive men and popular opinion pronounce sacred, take the name of a human leader whom they dread to desert, and adopt as their standard not so much the Scriptures as the

interpretation of confident fellow-beings, who condemn all but themselves and their servile adherents. To this timid spirit we owe the worst corruptions of Christianity in earlier times, and it is this which still obscures the glory of our religion.

"Remember, my friends, that the great doctrine of the Reformation was this, — that Jesus Christ is the only infallible teacher of his Church, and that to him, as he speaks in his word, and not to human guides, we are all bound to listen. It is the character of the consistent Protestant, and of the enlightened Christian, that he calls no man master, and bows his faith and conscience to no human tribunal. He is not intimidated by positive assertion, anathemas, and cries of heresy. He goes to no infallible head, whether at Rome, Geneva, or Wittemberg, borrows no creed from Trent or Westminster, takes no name from Luther, Calvin, or Arminius, intrenches himself behind no traditions of forefathers and ancient saints. He, indeed, avails himself of the lights and arguments of good and great men of present and former times. But Jesus is the only *authority* to whom he submits.

"Every church in Christendom has its errors, and perhaps errors which to future ages may seem as gross as many earlier superstitions appear to the present generation. In reading Scripture impartially, we may be compelled to dissent from opinions which are embraced by multitudes with an excess of zeal. In this case our path is plain. Let us be meek, but bold, professors of truth. Let us all adhere with firmness to what we deliberately and solemnly believe to be the truth of God. Let us not shrink from its defence because it is persecuted, because it is unpopular, because it may expose us to an evil name. Truth should be dearer to us than reputation. We must remember that it has seldom made its way without exposing its professors to suffering and reproach, and in the reproach of our Master we should be willing to share.

"This right to consult and judge for himself of God's word is our neighbour's as well as our own. Whilst we claim it for ourselves, let us not deny it to others. Let us give what we ask. Let us be anxious, not to make men think as we do, but to direct them to the only source of truth; and let us not condemn their motives, if in interpreting the Scriptures they differ from ourselves.

"There is a strong disposition in men to make their own creeds standards for those around them, to cling to the opinions on which they differ from others with peculiar confidence and tenacity, and, as if incapable of error, to look with an evil eye on those who doubt them. But this is a strange inconsistency in a Protestant. The claim of infallibility was the very article of the Romish church against which Luther most strenuously set his face. He maintained that popes, councils, fathers, and the whole Church might err; and who of us that reads the records of the Church, who that sees the lamentable and now acknowledged errors both of the Romish and Protestant communions, will not assent to this doctrine of human frailty? Yet, in opposition to this principle, how many Protestants clothe themselves with that infallibility which they have condemned and derided in Rome, assume this very place of pope in the Church, prepare articles of faith for their brethren, and give over to perdition those who will not receive their decrees! To this usurping and uncharitable spirit the miseries of the Church in every age are to be traced. It is this which has divided Christians into hostile bands, kindled public wars, and made the page of Christian history as black and bloody as the records of heathenism.

"Strange, that, with all history to instruct us, we do not learn to be humble, candid, and tolerant; that we do not remember that we, and not our brothers, may have erred; and that, even if we are right, it does not become us to pronounce his error a crime.

"The peace of the Church has been long enough disturbed. There is but one way to restore it. We must respect each other's rights, feel our own fallibility, be kind to them that differ from us, and be just to the excellencies and sincerity of all denominations. Look where we will into the innumerable divisions of the Church, we may everywhere find marks of the spirit of Jesus. The Catholic church, even if it seems to us the most corrupt, can boast of names which do honor to humanity. Let us cease to think that our own sect has engrossed all truth and all goodness. This charity is the ornament of the true Christian, and the only bond which can unite disciples too long divided, the only remedy which can heal the wounded and lacerated body of Christ."

ADDRESS AT THE FORMATION OF THE BERRY-STREET CONFERENCE.

May, 1820. LIBERAL CHRISTIANITY. "The views and dispositions which have led to this meeting may easily be expressed. It was thought by some of us, that the ministers of this Commonwealth who are known to agree in what are called *Liberal and catholic views of Christianity* needed a bond of union, a means of intercourse, and an opportunity of conference not as yet enjoyed. It was thought that by meeting to join their prayers and counsels, to report the state and prospects of religion in different parts of the Commonwealth, to communicate the methods of advancing it which have been found most successful, to give warning of dangers not generally apprehended, to seek advice in difficulties, and to take a broad survey of our ecclesiastical affairs, and of the wants of our churches, — much light, strength, comfort, animation, zeal would be spread through our body. It was thought that, by such a meeting, brotherly love would be advanced, that a foundation would be laid for joint exertion, and that many valuable objects, which

now languish through our ignorance of each other, and want of concert, might be prosecuted with vigor and success. It was thought that the circumstances of the times demand a more earnest coöperation than formerly, — that, living, as we do, in an age in which the principle of combination, the power of associated numbers, is resorted to by all sects and parties in an unprecedented degree, we were bound to avail ourselves of this instrumentality, as far as consists with the free, upright, independent spirit of our religion. For these ends it was proposed that an annual meeting should be held which should be spent in prayer, in hearing an address from one of our number, in offering reports as to the state of our churches, and in conference as to the best methods of advancing religion.

"The individuals who originated this plan did not, however, intend to forestall the opinions of their brethren, by making their plan too minute; but wished that at the first meeting the whole question should be considered at large: — 'In what way the ministers who are understood to hold the milder forms of Christianity may be brought into closer connection and more united exertion.' I have only to add, that in one particular they were agreed, — that, whilst the meeting should be confined to those who harmonize generally in opinion, it should be considered as having for its object, not simply the advancement of their *peculiar views*, but the general diffusion of *practical religion* and of the *spirit of Christianity*.

"Having thus given the views of the individuals who suggested this meeting, I proceed to address you on some of the topics which were considered to be most suited to the occasion, and shall offer some remarks, — first, on the general spirit which belongs to our profession; and secondly, on the duties which are particularly appropriate to us in the present state of the Church.

"The general spirit which belongs to us as ministers,

which constitutes the spirit of our profession, which gives force and earnestness to exertion, and seriousness and dignity to the character, originates in a cherished conviction of the greatness of our end. We are to feel as men set apart to a great work, who have great interests depending on us, great powers and instruments for doing good entrusted to us, and a solemn account to render for our use of these means. We must labor to raise our minds to the height of our vocation, to think generously, nobly of its design, to feel that we are devoted to an object deserving a far more intense energy of purpose than any of the interests for which worldly men contend so keenly and keep society in an uproar. Nothing calls forth the soul like a consciousness of being dedicated to a sublime work, in which illustrious beings are our associates, and of which the consequences are interminable. I am speaking with no inflation, I trust. I am not using common-place language to which I attach little meaning, when I say that this is the consciousness which should accompany us through our office, and be the all-pervading, all-quickening spirit of our private studies and public labors.

"The Christian religion is in a particular manner committed to the care, watchfulness, protection of ministers; and Christianity, if it be true, must be acknowledged as eminently the cause of God and the highest interest of human beings. We exaggerate nothing when we speak of all human institutions, — government, science, arts, public wealth, public prosperity, of all the outward, positive goods of life, and even of the progress of intellect and the development of genius, as inferior and comparatively unimportant concerns; for man's relations to God and to a future life are, after all, the true springs of purity, goodness, greatness, consolation, joy; and it is by making them known in their reality and extent, that *society* is to be advanced and refined, as well as *individuals* redeemed and trained for Heaven.

"Let us, then, never forget that the religion which reveals the True God and Immortal Life, which is the best legacy of past ages, and the only hope for the future, is committed to us, to be preserved, extended, perpetuated; and let the dignity of our office — an office before which the splendor of thrones and the highest distinctions of earthly ambition grow dim — be used by us to develop a just elevation of mind, a force of resolution and action, a superiority to temporary applause, a willingness to live and die, to labor and suffer, for the promotion of Christianity. . . . . .

"The present is not an age of controversy of believers with infidels, but of believers with believers; and it is not uncommon now to hear the name of Christian denied to those who, in earlier seasons of peril, were thought the most powerful defenders of the faith. It is not, however, the distinguishing peculiarity of our times that Christian fights with Christian, for such contentions make up the burden of ecclesiastical history; but this seems to me to be the striking distinction of the age, that Christians, instead of being arrayed, as heretofore, under the different standards of little sects, are gradually gathering by large masses and with systematic order into *two* great divisions. These two great divisions are known among us by the names of ORTHODOX and LIBERAL; and although it is true that other party distinctions remain, yet these are so prominent and comprehensive, that they deserve our peculiar and almost exclusive attention, in considering the special duties which are imposed on us by the times.

"This most important division of the Christian community is traced to different causes by the different parties. The Orthodox maintain that the great cause of it is an arrogant disposition in their opponents to exalt reason at the expense of Revelation, to scatter the sacred cloud of mystery which hangs over the deep things of God, to reject the

Divine word because it apparently contradicts the conclusions of human understanding. On the other hand, the Liberal or Rational maintain that this division is to be traced to the advancement of the human mind, to the establishment of just principles of Biblical criticism, to the emancipation of Christianity from the corruption of ages of darkness, and that it is not their unwarrantable boldness, but a servile adherence on the part of their opponents to prejudices consecrated by antiquity, which prevents the union of Christians.

"These explanations, though totally opposed to each other, assist us to understand the true nature of the controversy which agitates the community. We may learn from them, that particular doctrines are not the chief walls of separation. The great question is not, whether the trinity or vicarious punishment or innate sin be true. There is a broader question which now divides us, and it is this, — *How far is* REASON *to be used in explaining* REVELATION *?*

"The Liberal Christian not only differs from his Orthodox brother on particular points, but differs in his mode of explaining that Book which they both acknowledge to be the umpire. He maintains, that the great, essential principles of Christianity, such as God's unity and paternal character, and the equity and mercy of his administration, are there revealed with noontide brightness, and that they accord perfectly with the discoveries of nature, and the surest dictates of our moral faculties. Consequently he maintains that passages of Scripture, which, taken separately, might give different ideas of God's nature and government, are, in common candor to the sacred writers, to be construed in consistency with these fundamental truths. He affirms, too, that just as far as we acquaint ourselves with the circumstances under which these passages were written, such a consistent interpretation is seen to be the intention of the authors, and that we are therefore justified in believing that nothing but the antiquity of the sacred writings prevents us

from making the same discovery in relation to other passages which continue to be obscure.

"The Orthodox Christian discards as impious this exercise of reason, though he himself not seldom is compelled to resort to it, and maintains that the Scriptures are frittered away by his opponents because they take the liberty which when needed is taken by all, of explaining figuratively certain passages, which, according to their literal import, seem to contradict the general strain of Scripture and the clearest views which God's works and word afford of his wisdom and goodness. Such is the state of the controversy among us. A rational, consistent interpretation of Scripture is contended for by one party, who maintain that before such an interpretation the doctrines of the Trinity, of Infinite Satisfaction, of Election, of Irresistible Grace, and Sudden Conversion, fly as the shades of the night before the sun; whilst the other party maintain that these doctrines are not a whit the less credible because they offend reason and the moral sense, that an important part of faith is the humiliation of the understanding, weakened and perverted as it is by sin, and that mystery is one of the sure and essential marks of Divine revelation.

"The question now presents itself, What duties result from this state of the Church?

"Is this controversy an important one? Is this rational interpretation of the Scriptures for which we plead important? Are the docrines which seem to us to flow from such interpretation worth contending for? These questions will help us to judge of our duty at the present moment. And in answer to them I would maintain, that the controversy is of great importance, and that we owe to Jesus Christ, our Master, and to his gospel, a strenuous defence of the rational, consistent interpretation which we are seeking to give to his word. The success, perhaps the very existence, of Christianity requires this service at our hands. Christianity cannot flourish, or

continue, unless thus interpreted. It is a fact, that, however disordered human affairs seem to be, society is becoming more enlightened; and there is a growing demand for a form of religion which will agree with the clear dictates of conscience and the plain manifestations which the universe makes of God. An irrational form of religion cannot support itself against the advances of intelligence. We have seen in Catholic countries a general revolting of enlightened men from Christianity, through disgust at Popery, the only form under which it was presented to their view. Let an irrational Protestantism be exclusively propagated, so that the intelligent will be called to make their election between this and infidelity, and the result can hardly be doubted. The progressive influence of Christianity depends mainly on the fact that it is a rational religion; by which I mean, not that it is such a system as reason could discover without revelation, and still less that it is a cold and lifeless scheme of philosophical doctrines, but that it is a religion which agrees with itself, with our moral nature, with our experience and observation, with the order of the universe, and the manifest attributes of God. . . . . .

"I have time to add but one more reason for earnestly and firmly defending and spreading what we deem the consistent, rational, and just interpretation of Christianity; and it is this, that the cause of *Practical Religion*, of evangelical piety and morals, is deeply concerned in this movement. On this point a more particular discussion is needed than the present limits allow, because increasing pains are taken to represent our views as unfriendly to vital religion, and to connect with opposite doctrines the ideas of devoted zeal and seriousness. This fact is particularly interesting to *us*, for our great work as Christian ministers is to promote *Practical Christianity*, love to God and love to man; and our peculiarities are suspicious indeed, if they are in any manner unfavorable to this supreme end of our office.

"But the reproach is groundless. On the contrary, the chief motive, I conceive, for insisting on and spreading rational views is, that they are manifestly more suited than so-called Orthodox views to reconcile men's hearts to God, to purify and exalt human nature, to advance charity and philanthropy, and all the peculiar virtues of the gospel. Did I not believe this, I should say, let us at once lay down the weapons of controversy · for even if we hold the truth, it is not worth contending for, it ought not to be contended for, at the hazard of the peace of the community, if it is only a theorem for the speculative intellect, an abstract science, without power to operate on the character, inapplicable to the conscience and life. Again I say, it is the *practical influence* of Liberal views, it is the baneful tendency of Orthodox views, which summons us to the zealous advocacy of rational and consistent Christianity."

1820. CONGREGATIONALISM. "Our fathers maintained the independence of Christian churches. This was their fundamental principle. They taught that every church or congregation of Christians is an independent community, — that it is competent to its own government, has the sole power of managing its own concerns, electing its own ministers, and deciding its own controversies, and that it is not subject to any other churches, or to bishops, or synods, or assemblies, or to any foreign ecclesiastical tribunal whatever. This great principle seemed to our fathers not only true, but infinitely important. . . . . .

"The question now offers itself, Were our fathers justifiable in adopting and asserting this principle? And one answer immediately suggests itself. In the Scriptures we find not one word of a national church, not an intimation that all the churches of the same country should link themselves together, should give up their independence and self-control, and subject themselves to a common master and a few prelates.

In Scripture we find but two uses of the word Church, when applied to religious concerns. It sometimes means the whole body of Christians spread over the earth, and sometimes a particular congregation of Christians accustomed to meet in one place. That such congregations are to submit themselves to one common head or pope, as the Catholics teach, or to a national head, as the English church teaches, or to any power or tribunal distinct from that which subsists in each, is nowhere even hinted in the Scriptures. Such connections are human arrangements, and can be defended only by arguments drawn from their necessity, or their obvious fitness to promote the ends of the Christian religion.

"But can such a defence be sustained? What benefits, I pray you, are to be expected from uniting particular churches into a mass, a body, under one government? To answer these questions, consider the purposes for which churches are instituted,—and they may be expressed in a short compass. Churches are instituted that Christians may grow in knowledge, piety, and charity, by meeting together as Christians, by joining in worship, by communing together in Christ's ordinances, by receiving instruction from a public teacher, and uniting in good works. The association is a friendly one, intended to promote holiness, truth, and universal virtue, by persuasion, example, and intercourse. Now, I ask, how are these objects advanced by combining many churches under one government? Will a church be more strongly united in love, will it worship more fervently, or make surer progress in truth, if its minister be appointed, its worship regulated, its creed established, by a foreign power, be that power a pope, or a king, or an assembly of bishops, or an assembly of elders? One would think that every church could better consult its own edification — and this is its great object — than strangers.

"There should undoubtedly be a close union between different churches, but *a union of charity*, and not a consoli-

dation into one mass, or a subjection to one tribunal. This last mode of binding churches together is uncongenial with the free and equal spirit of Christianity, engenders ambition, intrigue, and jealousy, subjects Christ's Church to civil or ecclesiastical bondage, substitutes force for persuasion, and stifles the spirit of inquiry. These are almost inevitable effects. Once create a power or jurisdiction over all the churches of a country, or over a large number, and you create a prize for ambition. This power becomes important to the magistrate, it excites the craving of the clergy. They who gain it will not fail to strengthen and extend it; free inquiry will be its prey; and the cardinal virtues of the gospel — humility, meekness, and charity — will be trodden under its feet. . . . . .

"Congregationalism is the only effectual protection of the Church from usurpation, the only effectual security of Christian freedom, of the right of private judgment. As such let us hold it dear. Let us esteem it an invaluable legacy. Let us resist every effort to wrest it from us. Attempts have been made, and may be repeated, to subject our churches to tribunals subversive of their independence. Let the voice of our fathers be heard, warning us to stand fast in the liberty with which Christ has made us free. The independence of our churches was the fundamental principle which they aimed to establish here, and here may it never die." *

* The reader, who would trace the gradual development of Mr Channing's principles, should read in connection with this address the tracts on Objections to Unitarian Christianity Considered, 1819, Works, Vol. V., pp. 393 - 410, The Moral Argument against Calvinism, 1820, Works, Vol. I., pp. 217 - 241, and chiefly the Discourse at the Ordination of the Rev. Jared Sparks, Baltimore, 1819, Works, Vol. III., pp. 59 - 103.

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